mechanics theory says that the observer, does not ~~doing~~ really peer unobtrusively through a plate of glass, but actually "manipulates and participates" in whatever he describes, and thereby brings about unavoidable and generally unpredictable changes, through the peculiar interaction between the observer's consciousness and the ~~physical~~ material reality ~~he~~ that is observed. In other words, the result is decided one way or ~~only when~~ the other only when the observer has had a look at the matter, and it is quite senseless to say that the situation ~~I~~ was really ~~that way~~ the very same before it was observed.

All this is, of course, quite contrary to what our commonsense tells us: something must be one way or another, it cannot be both ways! A large number of experiments, however, clearly point to the fact that commonsense is not to be depended upon, and that nature happens to be stranger than what we would expect it to be. And yet, is the quantum mechanics conclusion truly so strange? Is it strange that an interconnectedness should exist between things and events binding the entire universe into one intimate unit comprising the material manifestation, ~~the mind~~ and consciousness together with the mind (which is the content of consciousness)? Is this not precisely what the Indian mystics have been saying for years and years? Is this not ~~exactly~~ precisely what ~~was in~~ is conveyed by the ancient Chinese saying, "You pull out a blade of grass and you shake the universe"? Is it not, therefore, logical that the new physics "should draw the observer on to the stage as an active participant in the spectacle his senses pick ~~up~~ up"? Does it need ~~much~~ any more experimentation to know that the dynamics of the observer's consciousness is not separable from the dynamics of the consciousness of the observed object?

Finally, Niels Bohr, in his well-known essay entitled "Biology and Atomic Physics" speaks of "the impossibility in psychical experience to distinguish

between the phenomena themselves and their conscious perception (which) clearly demands[113] a renunciation of the simple causal description on the model of classical physics". Can this statement be so very far from the mystic's view that subject and object become indistinguishable because one mirrors the other in a self-referent cycle? The Indian mystic has always ~~the~~ <u>known</u> — he has never felt the need of any confirmation from anyone — that every object is a mirror, that every time one sees an object, one is truly perceiving the subject of that object in its objective manifestation. The usual, ordinary, phenomenal perception can only be a conceptual <u>interpretation</u> by an illusory entity that may be called a "psychic complex".

← The Individual Persona

Perhaps the most direct pointer to the ~~sow~~ real nature of the human being is contained in the oft-repeated story of Chuang-Tzu's piglets: the mother sow died while suckling her piglets, and almost at once the little pigs just left the dead body because obviously ~~their~~ mother was no longer there. This idea that is basic to most religious beliefs has been prevalent almost all over the world, though the essential significance was not always grasped. Thus in Europe, the word "animus" was used for That which "animates" the psychosomatic aspect of sentient beings; However, what was indicated by the word "animus" was different in the West and the East: While in the West the word was considered as personal to each individual phenomenonal object, in the East the word has had the more comprehensive aspect of "consciousness" or "Heart" or "Mind" in an impersonal and universal sense.

This impersonal or universal consciousness, when it manifests itself as the phenomenal universe, objectifies itself as ~~the a~~ subject and object; and in this process it becomes identified with each sentient object. The result is that thereby the concept of a separate, independent "me" arises in human beings, to whom the phenomenal universe appears to be not just an appearance but ~~as~~ a reality, with substance, with "thing-ness". This objectivizing of pure subjectivity ("pure" ~~because the~~ as opposed to the pseudo-subjectivity of the "me"-concept) and calling it "me" as a separate,
14 / autonomous entity, is precisely the supposed bondage from which "liberation" is sought.

It is interesting and instructive to go into the process by which the "me" creates bondage in relation to the Absolute, and unhappiness and conflict in relation to his relationship with the outside world

from which he has separated and alienated himself.

There cannot but be a solution of continuity between an appearance and its source, like the appearance of the moon as a reflection in water and the moon itself in the sky, or like an image in the mirror and the object that is mirrored. And therefore man has from times immemorial felt an intuitive dissatisfaction with the separation caused by the identification of the impersonal, universal consciousness with each sentient object. Of course, such separation was basically necessary for the creation of duality, which is the very basis of the phenomenal manifestation, of the observer and the observed object, subject and object, pleasure and pain etc. However, man has always been asking himself "Who really am I?". He has not, deep down, fully identified himself with the body-mind apparatus, and the question itself is at once an indication of his intuitive identification with his source, and an effort to seek that source. In deep sleep there is no separation of any kind, and the state of deep sleep is identical for every sentient being. It is a state that every sentient being needs and wants at regular intervals. The state of deep sleep is a hazy reflection of our real state.

The very first separation occurs when in that primordial state of the Absolute, the consciousness-at-rest, the spontaneous thought "I AM" occurs along with the concurrent appearance of the phenomenal universe as the totality of manifestation — because that is its nature as the totality of potential, the fullness of plenum! The second separation comes about when in its movement as the primal energy — I AM — consciousness[15] identifies itself with each sentient object, and the "me" concept arises whereby each human being considers itself a separate, autonomous

being. This separation is between the "me" and the rest of the world, the latter being considered as the enemy out to destroy the "me". The "me" strengthens itself by acquiring what it considers as "mine" — "relations and friends" — thus widening ~~the~~ its own sphere and strengthening itself. Of course, this ~~cir~~ circle of "mine" is rather an elastic one, expanding and contracting to drive out those who have turned out to be enemies and ~~to~~ to include those who are at the moment considered as friends.

The problem for the "me" really consists in the fact that it knows that the separation is a false phenomenon and that perfection without any boundaries is his true nature. What is not deeply understood is that in this perfection that he seeks, the "me" itself must perish. The "me" is itself the separation that is sought to be corrected. The non-realization of this fact makes the "me" try to improve itself. The unfortunate result of ~~t~~ such efforts at self-improvement is that the "me" creates further and deeper separation _within_ itself. The deeper this separation goes, the more the confusion arises. ~~While~~ The separation between the "me" and the phenomenal world — between the individual organism and the impersonal, universal consciousness — ~~was~~ is at a trans-personal level, and therefore at a metaphysical level. But the further separation caused by the self-improvement efforts lead at best to a mental frustration and at worst to total insanity.

The ultimate "happening" of what is generally known as enlightenment, or awakening, or liberation can come about only when there is clear apperception of Reality, the what-is here-and-now. And the hallmark of this apperception, or ultimate understanding, is that it can come about only when the "me" is annihilated, that is to say, when the understanding is pure, or without the presence of a comprehender which would put the understanding at an intellectual level. Thus the reading

or listening at the transpersonal level is done not with the eye or the ear but with the heart; and this puts the "me" further and further into the background until it gets totally annihilated. In the other case, however, the self-improvement efforts are made by the "me", and the more the energy goes into such efforts, the stronger the "me" becomes. What such self-improvement efforts do is to put more and more limitations within the "me" concept until the "me" loses all touch not only with the metaphysical Reality but even with the environmental reality — a confusion in the mind which could lead to insanity.

The creation of limitations within the organism proceeds like this. The initial limiting line between "me" and "not-me" is that which separates the organism as such from the rest of the world. That is to say, the boundary line is the skin within which is enclosed the organism — everything within the skin is "me", everything without is the "not-me" or the "other" representing the outside world. Within the outside world there is, of course, what is considered as "mine" (the boundary for which is elastic and changes almost continuously depending on the relationships of the "me" with the outside world). However close the "mine" may be, it is still outside the skin-boundary of the "me".

The first schism within the organism occurs with the realization that the "me", the ego, while inextricably bound to the body mechanism, is not the body itself, because there is the instinctive feeling that one has a body, that the body is the nature of a possession, and that the body is more in the nature of "mine" than "me". The basic reason for this schism is ignorance of the fact that the body is indeed of the nature of a possession but that the possessor is not the illusory, conceptual "me" but

impersonal consciousness which has, through identification with the individual organism, lost its universality, and has taken on a personal aspect. Indeed what first considers itself to be in bondage, and then seeks liberation from this bondage, is not the illusory, conceptual "me" but the consciousness itself seeking to shed its personal aspect and return to its impersonal universality.

Actually the organism as such is a psychosomatic apparatus which gets its aliveness, its I-am-ness only because it is endowed by nature (or consciousness) with its aspect of sentience. In other words, the psyche and the soma, the mind and the body constitute one whole mechanism, and the split is not only uncalled for but is indeed the proof of the manner in which the body has been ignored and abused, and the intellect pampered to an extent that the intuitive faculties of the civilized man have atrophied. The result is a lopsided development of the civilized man, leading to tension, conflict and unhappiness. This prejudice in favour of the mind and the schism between mind and body works on the infant, conditioning it continuously until by the time the infant has matured into adolescence, the split is so complete that the individual considers himself primarily the mind and the body as a mere appendage, or, as even St. Francis referred to his body, "poor brother ass" to ride around for one's necessary movements in this world. It is because of this dichotomy that there is an inescapable feeling that our decisions and actions are dictated by a tiny man in the head. As soon as there is realization that what we *are* is the universal consciousness which directs all psychosomatic mechanisms like puppets in the play of Maya, all splits and schisms get healed, and universal harmony prevails.

The immediate result of the body-mind split is that the individual considers himself to be not the total organism but only an aspect of it, that is to

say, the mind or the ego. If he is asked, or if he himself thinks, about his identity, he would identify himself with "a more or less accurate mental self-image, along with the intellectual and emotional processes associated with that self-image." The next step in the process of fragmentation and exclusion within the organism comes about with the limiting of the ego to certain characteristics ~~demanded~~ required by[118] a certain ideal. The ego or the self-image is confined only to an ideal demanded by ~~the~~ ~~religion~~ society ~~and~~ and/or commanded by religion, and all other characteristics are thrown out of the self-image as part of the not-self. This truncated self-image is what the individual considers to be himself — the persona.

Thus it is that the conceptual individual narrows himself down until he is totally dominated and bound by the persona. Duality is the very basis of the phenomenal manifestation in the construct of space-time: space in which objects could be constructed in the three dimensions, and time or duration in which the constructed objects could be observed. All are objects in the manifestation which appears in consciousness, observed and cognized by consciousness, in consciousness. It is only in the duality of the observer-object and the observed-object that manifestation can function. But as soon as the universal impersonal consciousness appears as sentience in each object, it identifies itself with each such object in a subject-object relationship, and thereby ~~has~~ apparently loses its universality and impersonality. The personal, or individual consciousness identifies itself with the individual organism; thereafter, through intellectual conditioning it identifies itself not with the whole psychosomatic organism but predominantly with the psyche alone, relegating the body to the position of the "poor brother ass"; from the psyche-ego there is a further narrowing down, from the ~~full ego to~~ full self-image of the ego to a truncated ~~so~~ self-image of the persona, from which are thrown

out all the "unwanted" aspects or characteristics of the ego. So there is the play of Maya showing the downfall of consciousness first from universality to the ego and then to the persona — like the king dreaming that he is a helpless, destitute beggar.

The significant point in this analysis is that with each narrowing down of identity from universality to persona, the individual creates for himself more and more problems and conflicts and unhappiness. And the tragedy is that he does not realize that the cause of his unhappiness lies not in the outside world, as he thinks, but within himself. Thus, the more he tries to protect himself and what he considers as his security, the tighter become the bonds with which he has trapped himself. The more efforts he makes with the help of psychologists, psychiatrists, gurus, the more trussed he becomes, until perhaps a stage is reached when he either commits suicide, or he surrenders himself to what he considers the inevitable fate.

The fact of the matter is that all efforts must necessarily emanate from the illusory ego — whether full or truncated — which really means from that very mind (thought-intellect) which has brought him to such a sorry plight. And the relief, the liberation is possible only when the mind ceases to function beyond its allotted routine, technical scope, when conceptualization ceases so that the usual desires, fears, hopes, ambitions go back to their source. This is possible only when there is a total transformation in the viewpoint — <u>metanoesis</u> — which can come about only when the mind surrenders itself completely and merges itself in its source, which is consciousness: I Am. There can be no technique or system for this for the simple reason that they all refer to the illusory ego or individual, and for the transformation to <u>happen</u>, the ego must vanish. When the mind surrenders, personal consciousness realizes its universality — which is what is really meant by enlightenment. In other words, the true

surrender of the mind comports the understanding that the individual (with his truncated aspects) never did exist except as a mere mental construct in consciousness, without any independence or autonomy, and that the organism as such was an object like any other in the phenomenal manifestation.

The question that would naturally arise at this juncture is: if there is no individual at all who could make positive efforts, how does the transformation occur? The start of the transformation is a <u>deep</u> feeling of utter dissatisfaction with life, — what Vedanta calls "dispassion". This feeling is likely to be diagnosed or interpreted by professional people as social maladjustment and given some technical label. Indeed this is
120 precisely what happened to a friend of mine. He went from one professional to another, gobbled up medicines literally in dozens, until he suddenly realized that he could not possibly survive another six months at the pace at which he was sliding down into the abyss. He did what very few people would have done. He resigned from a top level executive position with immediate effect, sold his house, handed over all the keys to his nephew, and took the next available plane to India, after making the necessary arrangements for regular remittances. It so happened that he finally landed at the feet of Nisargadatta Maharaj in Bombay. In the few days before he left Canada for India, friends congratulated him on his bold decision. "I smiled," he told me, "and made suitable noises, but actually I was scared to death — and yet I could not have done otherwise."

This deep sense of dispassion and a sincere dissatisfaction with life is the point of the inward turning of the personal consciousness, the point of no return in the quest for the source. As Ramana Maharshi used to say, once this happens, it is like "putting your head in the tiger's

monte" — the "you", the "me", cannot expect to survive; and with the annihilation of the "me" arises spontaneously, naturally, and suddenly the supreme understanding. Dispassion, arising out of the suffering which the persona has brought about, leads to surrender to the What-is in the here-and-now: past and future cease to have any real meaning because the surrender is to the present moment.

This dispassion towards life almost amounting to suffering, or even positive suffering, must be viewed not as suffering itself but as a symptom of some happening or occurrence as such. When this suffering is taken to be happening to some "one", an individual, then what takes place is not really surrender but panic — the two are diametrically opposed. One leads to the breaking of the self-imposed boundaries or limitations which had culminated in the persona, while the other, then burrowing down into the narrowed persona, could lead to tragedy. True surrender presupposes the realization of the helplessness of the individual because of his illusoriness (and thus the illusoriness of the boundaries) and therefore leads to liberation from all boundaries.

What is necessary is to prepare a certain groundwork for the surrender — the letting-go — to take place. It must be clearly understood that this preparation is not positive action — indeed, positive action, like trying to improve oneself by various methods, is what has brought about the persona. The preparation of the groundwork is merely the understanding of how the persona boundary (and the other boundaries) has come into being, and how the drawing of a boundary line, any boundary line, means in effect the drawing of a potential battle line.

What is to be understood is that each boundary means that much limitation in one's self-identity, from the no-boundary universality to the inaccurate and emaciated self-image of the persona. The

persona boundary gets drawn when ~~the~~ there is an absence of recognition that one's phenomenal identity, the ego, is necessarily a mixture in varying proportions of ~~the~~ characteristics and tendencies which are currently considered in terms of good and bad, desirable and undesirable. In trying to improve himself consciously, the individual denies those tendencies which ~~are~~ he considers undesirable, and <u>rejects</u> them. But such rejected tendencies do not really vanish; ~~and~~ they remain and accumulate under the carpet. Such suppression is the root cause of many mental disturbances. ~~A What~~ The realization of the fact that the unwanted aspects of one's ego are an integral part of ~~the~~ what makes for the supposed individual is the first step towards the relief ~~of the~~ through surrender.

Once the basic realization of the oneness of the good and the bad within the individual ego comes about, all that is really needed is letting-go and witnessing the ~~working~~ operation of this realization. It is of the utmost importance to understand that what works is the <u>impersonal realization in which there is really no comprehender</u>; ~~the~~ as soon as the comprehender intrudes, the surrender is no longer the surrender. True surrender implies an understanding and total acceptance of <u>all</u> characteristics and tendencies <u>inherent</u> in the psycho-somatic organism — positive and negative, lovable and despicable — as part of the totality of What-Is. ~~Once~~ As this realization becomes stronger and stronger, it ~~keep~~ continues on its upward course at a faster and faster ~~p~~ pace, the illusory individual goes further and further into the background, allowing the harmony of the universality to come to the forefront. In other words, surrender and realization react on each other to partake more vigorously of the current of cosmic energy, so that at some appropriate time occurs what is known as sudden enlightenment,

which means the healing of the apparent schism between the universal, impersonal consciousness and the individual personal consciousness.

← **The Individual IS the problem.**

No animal finds "life" a problem. Man is as much a part of the manifested world as is the animal, and if man finds life a problem, it stands to reason that that problem has been created by himself. To ask whether man should therefore ~~go~~ act like an animal is completely to miss the point, and pervert the issue.

What the problem indicates is the fact — and the problem has intrigued and harassed mankind for ages — that a comparatively large number of prophets and saints have been laying down rules and regulations, "do"s and "don't"s, for many long years, but all to no avail. Indeed, the problem has ~~increased~~ worsened both in tension and urgency so much so that mankind finds itself in danger of annihilation. If anyone were to suggest that it would really not matter to the totality of manifestation if mankind did annihilate itself, he would be considered an insensitive fool. And yet, this is precisely the point: the "problem" is created by man's imperfect perception of the manifested world, and the only way to resolve the problem is not to try to find a solution for it, but to discover why and how the perception is incorrect. If a mirror gives a distorted image, the problem lies not in the distortion

123 of the image but in the defective construction of the mirror. 123 If the perception is ~~improved~~ corrected, there would be no need of any solution for the problem of life: ~~that~~ the problem would just disappear. Very briefly, the imperfection lies in not perceiving the identity between the individual when perceiving ~~sees~~ an object and the object itself. ~~The individu~~ ~~Man has been~~ ~~considering~~

Man has been considering himself as an individual ~~entity~~ entirely separate from the rest of the world. He considers that the rest of the world exists so that he can grab from it anything that he wants for "himself". He extends his hand to the rest of the world not in a spirit of giving his cooperation for

mutual benefit but with a view to grabbing whatever he can lay his hands on. Give-and-take for him simply means you give and I take. But the fact of the matter is that no object (and man is very much an object, though, of course, endowed with sentience and intellect) can exist as an autonomous entity. The individual thinks of himself as a separate being but, as Schopenhauer taught, physical causality is only one of the working principles in the functioning of the world, the other being a metaphysical element, a universal consciousness, compared to which personal or individual consciousness is like "a dream compared to reality." In other words, there is an underlying unity in the apparent diversity of the universe — the basic principle of all non-dualistic teaching. It is interesting that even in the West, the idea of unity-in-diversity can be traced to the Pythagorean "Harmony of the Spheres", and the Hippocrates' "Sympathy of all things": "there is one common flow, one common breathing, all things are in sympathy."

That everything in the universe "hangs together" — partly through apparently mechanical causes, but basically through hidden affinities which express themselves as apparent coincidences — has been expressed by many thinkers. According to the considered view of modern physicists, "it is impossible to separate any part of the universe from the rest", and it is interesting to note that as far back as A.D. 1557, Pico della Mirandola summarized the matter succinctly by saying:

"Firstly there is the unity in things[124] whereby each thing is at one with itself, consists of itself, and coheres with itself. Secondly, there is the unity whereby one creature is united with the others and all parts of the world constitute one world."

Life becomes a problem for man because he ignores this fundamental fact of unity-in-diversity. The ignoring of this fact cannot but lead to conflict and confusion not only in the individual's relationship with the outside world but also within himself. ~~because~~ Recent research findings on a broad scale show a startling picture of human nature, human capacities and human relationships: "at the heart of each of us, whatever our imperfections, there exists a silent pulse of perfect rhythm, a complex of wave forms and resonances which is absolutely unique and individual, and yet which connects us to everything in the universe."

This unity-in-diversity is seen in various phenomena. Thus from the earliest times, there never has been a society of people in which there was no music and dance. Music and rhythm — "the play of patterned frequencies against the matrix of time" — seem to be at the very root of all existence; and it was surely the intuitive knowledge of this fact which made Pythagoras say that a stone is frozen music. Modern science now confirms that every particle in the manifested universe draws its natural characteristics from the pitch, pattern and overtones of its particular frequencies; and this seems to apply to all forms ~~of~~ and aspects of energy. ~~As one~~ ~~George Leonard~~ As one writer has put it, ~~in The Silent Pulse~~, "It is the pulsation, a musical quality called Vibrato, that wells up within the sounded note that can lead us to what is most spontaneous and creative in human life, and possibly even to deeper mysteries — to powers of knowing and doing which we have lost or given away during the epoch of civilization, and which perhaps we may now regain."

It is interesting that the rate of vibration — about seven pulsations a second — of the vibrato precisely matches the theta-wave state of the brain, which is associated with the twilight zone between

waking and sleeping in which the divided mind
(which normally separates through logic and reason)
125/ recedes deep into the background, giving free reign
to an expanded consciousness which has access
to the deepest wells of creation and therefore to extra-
ordinary psychic experiences.

Indeed, a powerful musical vibrato, capturing the rhythm in the brains of the listeners, could quite easily explain the extraordinary effects of Lord Krishna's bansuri on the minds of the "gopis", wherein all sense of separation could be lost. This would also explain the astonishing effect devotional music has, particularly on certain people whose understanding has greatly developed their receptivity to the vibrato. Actually, the emanation of a single note on a single musical instrument is known to be a matter of incredible complexity: "both volume and pitch interrelate with timbre or tone quality, which is a kind of sum product of all the details through which vibratory energy distributes itself..."

Melody and counterpoint gets created when the single note from a single violin is mingled with notes from other violins and other instruments, perhaps in addition to voices, and all these sounds begin to change with time. Indeed if any "problem" is posed in terms of a single part, the solution must lie not in direct relation to the problem but only in terms of "an intricate interwoven complexity of rhythms", that must dissolve the problem itself. In other words, what exists is a single, unified, explicit emotion, a "whole" in which the complexities cannot exist as independent parts. Indeed, if a note "A" is produced near a violin, the string relevant to the note "A" on the violin will start to vibrate on its own by resonance.

It is not that this phenomenon

is confined or restricted only to music. The way music works is not different from the world of objects and events, for the simple reason that everything is truly vibration or emanation. Thus, for instance, if you were under the impression that only you were concerned as the observer of a butterfly as your object, you would be quite wrong. Even a quick glance at the yellow wing of the butterfly would make the dye molecules in the retinas of your eyes vibrate, according to scientific calculation, approximately 500 trillion times; if the butterfly happened to be blue or purple, the number of vibrations or waves would increase because those colours vibrate faster. The rate of vibration for X-rays instead of light would speed up a thousand times, while in the case of gamma rays a million times. The vibratory rates of sub-atomic particles making up ordinary matter, we are told, are unimaginably higher while the waves at the heart of the atom's nucleus vibrate at a rate that would boggle one's imagination.

It may be that the spiritual Masters gave more prominence to hearing rather than seeing or reading for the simple reason that in the absence of printing — a comparatively recent development — the written word was not easily available. Nonetheless, it is a fact that what connects people more intimately with the matrix of existence is hearing rather than seeing, perhaps because sound seems to have, in our life, the particularly significant quality "of all-around-ness, of the here-and-now". From this point of view, three phenomena would be of interest:

a) If the rates of vibration of all radiated energy — heat, light, radio waves, X-rays etc. — were arranged in order, the resulting electro-magnetic spectrum would bring out more than seventy octaves, visible light being only one of them. All the "tones" in this spectrum would have their own harmonic overtones with certain

similarities appearing at octave levels.

(b) There seems to be a reason why many scientists and mathematicians are either musicians themselves or have an active interest in music: the musical nature of the world has been confirmed by many basic scientific discoveries. Thus the Periodic Table of Elements — the list of all chemical elements according to their graded atomic weights — breaks down into seven octaves "with properties that tend to repeat as in musical octaves."

(c) W. Ruff, an assistant professor of music and John Rodgers, a professor of geology, in an astonishing experiment, applied the "laws" and musical notations of Johannes Kepler, the seventeenth-century astronomer (who worked out the laws of planetary motion), and came out with startling results. Kepler believed that each of the planets, far from being dead matter, was very much "alive" and that each had its own music. In fact he proceeded to work out each planet's "song" in terms of its orbit around the sun. What Ruff and Rodgers did was to apply Kepler's laws and musical notations to the motion of the planets as projected over a hundred-year period starting 31st December 1976. This information was fed into a computer connected to a music synthesizer. What emerged was the music of 100 years of planetary motion, music of the spheres recorded on a thirty-minute tape: "a spectacular if somewhat dizzying piece of music, with Mercury, the fastest moving planet, singing the shrill ascending and descending slide of a piccolo, and Jupiter, the slowest, sounding a deep, powerful rumble." As Professor Rodgers put it, "Venus changes from a major to a minor sixth, and earth makes a marvellous minor second." Indeed, the heavens themselves would seem to have been ordered by rhythm, resonance and, above all, harmony.

We are normally accustomed to thinking in terms of action-reaction, stimulus-response in regard to human behaviour. While this may appear to be correct at the superficial level, the fact of the matter is that at the most fundamental level, the listener is not really reacting or responding to the speaker, but in a sense he is <u>one with</u> the speaker. The principle behind this seemingly astonishing fact is what is known as entrainment: "whenever two or more oscillators in the same field are pulsing at <u>nearly</u> the same time, they tend to 'lock-in' so that they are pulsing at <u>exactly</u> the same time" as if they <u>wanted</u> to keep the same time. It would seem that nature seeks all the time the most efficient energy level — it takes less energy to pulsate in unison than in opposition. We may not notice it but entrainment exists in all fields of activity, and is an aspect of the compulsive tendency towards perfect rhythm that exists in the very roots of our existence.

Living things contain oscillation. Indeed, although the fact may not be generally realized, living things pulsate or change rhythmically, and, therefore, <u>are</u> oscillators. In the complex organism of the human being, the frequencies of oscillation constitute a large number and so do the interactions between them.[120] Even the simplest single-celled organism oscillates to a number of different frequencies at various levels, and the microscopic movies of these organism show, we are told, a startling revelation of ceaseless, rhythmic pulsation. What is more, our internal rhythms are entrained not only with one another but also with the total manifestation. Our physical and mental states show noticeable changes in rhythm with the seasonal swing of the earth and the sun, with the tides, with the day-night cycle, and perhaps even with cosmic rhythms that science has yet to isolate and define. When, for any reason, these rhythms get forced out of

phase, disease is ~~likely~~ not unlikely and dis-ease ~~is~~ quite inevitable.

It is because those natural rhythms have indeed been forced out of phase, that man today finds himself confronted with physical disease and mental dis-ease. The consolatory fact is that, in the ultimate analysis, entrainment is not susceptible to long-term manipulation because, being the very stuff of life itself, it must ~~also~~ always reflect not only the essential interconnectedness of life and existence, but also the ceaseless change — with complete overall balance — that is the basis of the phenomenal manifestation.

Metaphysics has been expounding the oneness and interconnectedness of everything in the universe from times immemorial, but science has accepted the fact comparatively recently. And one would be considered churlish not to accept it, at least intellectually. The problem of the individual now takes a practical turn: if this is so, why does the individual have to face this problem? The answer is that the individual's perception of the world and the objects therein is defective. The basic point ~~is~~ about this defective perception is that when a person perceives an object consciously, he is attentive to it as an object. What he does actually is that he does not really perceive the object in its totality as the manifestation of the Absolute, representing totality itself; what he perceives is merely an appearance in his mind, ~~in his consciousness~~ based on the response of his senses organs to the contact with this outer object, and relating to the memory of his previous experiences.

129 129/ The mental image of the perceived object and the real object are not unconnected. The relationship between the two is comparable to that existing between a sectional plane of a volume and the volume itself. In other words, the perception is not altogether incorrect but inadequate.

All ornaments made of gold,

inspite of wide differences in shapes and sizes, will show the presence of gold, when tested on a touchstone, as the basic substance. Similarly, as everything in phenomenal manifestation owes its relative existence to the primal energy, all objects have an inherent aura or vibration or emanation, which is the reflection of the primal energy. In other words, there is an identity of structure (inspite of considerable differences in shapes) between all objects. And when one object is perceived by another object (gifted with sentience), the emanation from the perceived-object reacts on the perceiver-object's senses, and awakens a corresponding complex mental vibration. The mental image thus released in the perceiver, it must be noted, is not produced by the perceived object but is merely actualized or awakened by it.

If the perceiver-object were totally open to the emanation from the perceived-object, the communication of the resonance between the two would be at the centre of each, at the level of the interconnected identity, at the level of reality. In other words, the perception would be perfect because it would comport the perception of the identity between the perceiver and the perceived. The ordinary perception is defective because it lacks the underlying essence or hypostasis of phenomenal manifestation. The "identity-in-the-difference is divided into identity and difference" — the identity gets displaced by identification; the perceiver forgets his identity with the perceived-object and identifies himself with the perceiver-object as a separate entity, and, worse still, forgets the underlying reality in both.

How does the identification come about? The outer world as the perceived-object, offers total resonance through its centre, but the perceiver-object, instead of exhausting the current of resonance — the cosmic energy — at its own centre (in which case the perception would be perfect), allows the current to

pass on to the periphery. Thus the noumenal functional centre gets bypassed and the current moves on to the spurious operational centre. The receiving of the current of resonance at the noumenal functional centre is perfect perception or enlightenment; the other is the current passing on to the false operational centre which means defective perception. Why should this ~~be~~ happen ~~so~~? Because in the absence of defective perception — which means false interpretation of what is perceived — "Maya" would not be able to function and there would not be any dream-play of the phenomenal manifestation. ~~that this life presents.~~

The effect of the defective perception, of the identification with a mental image, is the creation of a spurious "me" — the supposed "individual" who finds life such a problem. This is because the cosmic flow of energy from the centre of the outside world (represented by the perceived object), ~~which~~ instead of expending itself in the centre of the perceiver-object, passes on to to the periphery, the operational centre of the brain-mind which is the seat of the disruptive feeling of acceptance or refusal, and the apparent choice between them. The true significance of this analysis is that while the supposed individual considers the perceived object as the disruptive factor causing the dualistic conflict, ~~it is in fact~~ the fact is that the conflict is caused by the ~~dualism~~ schism between the true functional centre and the spurious operational centre within the perceiver-object.

The essential point to remember is that the conflict is created not by the closing of the true centre (which is impossible because that is what we are) but by the superimposition of a closing mechanism on to that open, receiving centre. All that is truly needed is to shut off this useless, unnecessary appendage of the peripheral mind of dualism. If the closing mechanism ~~is~~ were switched off, the always open

functional centre of perfect perception would work naturally and spontaneously.

131/ The result of this dualism between subject (perceiver-object) and the perceived-object, between the acceptance of some things offered by the outside world and the non-acceptance of others is a conflict which is generated not by the outside world but *within* the perceiver-object which has assumed volition for itself as a "me". What this means in effect is that the "me" wishes to be non-emotional to unacceptable things and emotional to acceptable things. This apparent contradiction can be resolved only by a true understanding of the illusoriness of the "me" and therefore the illusoriness of the conflict. The dilemma is that experiencing means experiencing both joy and suffering, while not-experiencing means not experiencing the joy either. This dilemma is fictitious inasmuch as the outside world is not really concerned in it at all — it is all within the "me", and the realization of this fact is the true understanding, the illumination, the enlightenment.

The understanding basically is that living includes both joy and sorrow, that all events will take place irrespective of whatever any "me" may want or not want, that total participation — not refusal to the negative aspects of life — is the only answer because the human being is an integral part of the totality of manifestation, and the world would go on irrespective of the wants and desires of individual human beings.

This leads to the obvious question: What is to be done for achieving this understanding? Any answer would lead the "individual" to start *doing* something — meditation or any other "method" — which would in fact mean the "doing" of a dog when he is chasing his own tail. This is so because when we jump on to the question "what is to be done", what is forgotten is the basic fact that the one who wants to do something

is the illusory "me" and there is no such creature. In fact the whole trouble of conflict and unhappiness and bondage, from which a release is sought, is the creation of the doing by a "me". The "me", by his doing, is constantly creating a spectacle but there is no spectator; to the extent that the "me" sits in meditation and /32/ is not experiencing (or doing) anything, he is a spectator without a spectacle. It is only when, as a result of the deep understanding, the "me" remains completely in the background, doing nothing — and not-doing anything either — of his own supposed volition, that the "I" (the true nature of man) witnesses the spectacle of nature, the totality of the functioning, and there is both a spectacle and a spectator.

The sitting quietly, neither doing nor not-doing anything, may seem like utter chaos to those who have been taught to be on the go all the time, trying constantly to be on top of the "other" man, straining, vieing, competing against all comers. But this is not so. No one can suppress his inherent nature; the restless man will keep on doing something "positive" while the more cerebral man will sit back and think. But the point is that when the understanding is present, neither would think that what goes on is his doing. And the wonderful thing about this ultimate understanding is that it is not to be "acquired"; it cannot be acquired. It cannot be acquired for the simple reason that all of us are that understanding — we are not the "individuals" that we think we are.

It is entirely through totally incorrect conditioning, almost from the very birth, that the individual has reached a point where he thinks that it is the individuals who make the world run. In so thinking, man forgets some obvious facts. What makes homing-pigeons return to their roosts

after flying long distances? What makes migrant birds revisit the same places year after year with no recourse to any brains or technical apparatus? Indeed, how do the respiratory, circulatory and digestive systems in the human body work without any conscious direction from the brain?

What human conditioning over hundreds of years has achieved is the elevation in the status of the brain together with the neglect of even contempt for our bodies; through that has come about a sort of dichotomy between the cortex in the brain and the rest of the body. And it is this dissociated brain which is generally referred to as man's will or volition, based on memory. As one writer has put it, "we have allowed brain thinking to develop and dominate our lives out of all proportion to instinctual wisdom which we are allowing to slump into atrophy." The result is that we are at war within ourselves, the brain wanting things which the body does not need, and the body desiring things which the brain does not permit; the brain giving orders which the body cannot follow, and the body creating impulses which the brain cannot understand.

In actual fact, modern life is a vicious circle in almost every respect with the brain resorting to past memories to produce desires which must be satisfied in the future, a condition which is itself an inference. The basic mind or consciousness knows only reality in the present moment whereas the brainy mind — the divided mind — lives in the past and the future, and produces more and more desires and hopes and ambitions, — and frustrations. In other words, our culture has come to mean "an affront to the wisdom of nature and a ruinous exploitation of the human organism as a whole".

It is only those who apperceive the utter futility of living in this vicious circle who may be able to take a quantum leap out of it. It is not that

the brain is the villain of the piece. The fact of the matter is that the brain, working rightly and naturally, is the highest form of instinctual wisdom. It is the verbalizing, wanting to know the "how" — the self-consciousness — which creates the disorder. The understanding produces the effortlessness which makes for harmony, and it is the effortlessness — absence of conscious or volitional effort — which makes for understanding. And understanding can happen only when there is total absence of any comprehender. In other words, understanding happens only when the comprehender — the individual — merges in the understanding, and there is only the witnessing of the spectacle or dream of life without the least desire to change anything in the spectacle.

327

134

The Individual's Futile Search for Security

Insecurity has been a problem for the human individual ever since the dawn of time. Aggression from without, and poverty and disease within have been known to man in every age. And even in those rare times when there seemed to be a sense of security, it was only on the surface. For this deeper constant sense of insecurity, man could find no answer within ~~himself~~ — something which he could control — and therefore he sought refuge in some concept, some myth, some factor that was independent of any change, something constant to which he could pray and seek refuge in — God or the immortal soul or Atman or Brahman, or whatever.

The only trouble with any such concept as God or the soul is that it is after all a myth — the individual perhaps ~~knows~~ feels it deep within his heart — and once the suspicion of the myth is confirmed its power is gone, because a myth can work only so long as man believes that it is the truth. In the last few years, perhaps a hundred years or so, there appear to be, as one writer says, "fewer and fewer rocks to which we can hold, fewer things which we can regard as absolutely right and true, and fixed for all time." The Newtonian physics though based firmly on materialism, did not specifically contradict the religious tenets of the universe being ruled and governed by an infallible God by means of eternal laws of right and wrong. ~~All that~~ ~~Any~~ All that the man of science could say was that science could not prove whether or no God exists. That is to say, science could not prove that God did not exist, and that was enough for the religious.

What the nuclear physics and relativity and the theory of uncertainty have done is to go a vital step further and say that it seems almost certain that the universe was not "created" by any power but that the arising of the universe seemed a "self-generating process". The confusion is worse confounded by the fact that

modern science now views reality not as a conglomerate of separate things with boundaries but as a non-dual network of inseparable patterns, a seamless coat without boundaries or separations. In other words, the individual human today feels utterly lost without his boundaries, without the power outside of himself on which he thought he could depend, without the strap he could hang on to or the crutch on which he could lean. Actually what the modern scientist has done is to say that according to his view of the universe there is hardly any room for any meaning or purpose or design of any overall entity with supreme power by whatever name it might be called. In other words, he sees man as such an integral part of the universe that it seems hardly necessary for the human to try to divine any specific purpose in his life: to say that everything is created and regulated by God is like saying that "everything is round (or rectangular) and is made of such and such materials". But the effect of this on the common individual, especially in the West, is one of helplessness, hopelessness and frustration, resulting in escapism through some means or the other — drink, drugs, sex, or even senseless murder and suicide.

But the fact of the matter is that there is a "point of departure". And this point is the frank and open admission that there are really no good reasons for believing in any of the common beliefs regarding God or continuing immortality through the everlasting soul or whatever. A firm acceptance of this fact (without any sense of guilt whatsoever) at once brings about a feeling of total freedom and security: when you give up a belief, you give up the sense of insecurity on which that belief was based, and you are free to know yourself. Needless to say, such a point of departure is a point of total transformation in one's view of the entire picture —

the universe, the human individual, the other sentient beings and the insentient part of the universe. There has to be a sense, not of belief but of faith in the voyage of self-discovery. We decide to get out of the existing prison anyhow, whatever the "outside" may hold for us. Our self-discovery is now undertaken not with the intention of trying to confirm or find justification for our present preconceived notions and beliefs but with the faith that whatever we find will be the truth, the Truth which is self-evident and needs no outside support or justification, with the full understanding that our self-discovery could well be a jump off the cliff, a plunge into the unknown.

136/ The only thing we know for ourselves as a matter of certainty, without the slightest need of any thought, and without the need of any confirmation from anyone else, is the ineluctable fact that each of us can say "I Am" in the sense that I know I exist, I am alive, I am present: I am conscious. And, what is more, while in deep sleep one is not conscious of oneself, on waking up there is again the consciousness of being present not only on waking up but also during the deep sleep state. There is this essential difference between the two states of sleeping and waking: during deep sleep the consciousness of a "me" as an individual was not there, nor was there any feeling of insecurity or unhappiness, which arises once again only on waking up. What it really amounts to is that what was present in deep sleep is that consciousness which is identical in every individual; no individual in deep sleep is concerned with his existence or the awareness of his existence, either his fears and hopes or his frustrations and ambitions, which arise only when he wakes up. In other words, it is the universal or impersonal consciousness which is present in the deep sleep state of every individual; it is only when he wakes up that consciousness gets tainted with the individual personality of a "me" with all its

fears and frustrations, hopes and ambitions, his joys and miseries. This should at least make us think that what we really need is not to search for security which is a mythical state of mind but to get rid of the tainted "me" which has transformed the universal, impersonal consciousness into the personal consciousness of a "me", to understand the one-ness of universal consciousness in the astonishing diversity that forms the totality of the manifested universe. This is the vision of God that all religions talk about but is clouded by various beliefs and concepts concerning "God". It is not by striving to escape from the finite and relative world that we can "attain" the vision of God. It is only through the acceptance, without any reservation or doubt, of the oneness or identity not only between one manifested object (or individual) and all the others, but also between the manifested known universe and the unmanifest unknown potential, that the true vision of God happens.

13/ It is necessary to go to the root of the problem of insecurity in order to really understand it because in the very understanding of the problem it disintegrates. The sense of security and the feeling of a need for it arises out of a misunderstanding of the basics of what we call life. ~~If at any particular moment of time, one man is extremely unhappy and another is not, it should be clear that happiness or unhappiness is not really related to the phenomenon of "time".~~ The fact of the matter is that we do not really see that "change" as such is an integral aspect of life, and what we want is to stop the movie of life at a particular "still" depending upon what that still means to us in terms of what we then consider as happiness. When we fail to see change as life

itself just as the flow is really the river, we become 66 like Ouroboros, the misguided snake, who tries to eat his own tail.[27#] The only way to make sense out of change is to join it because you cannot avoid it! There is no other way: either plunge into life and welcome change as the spice of life, or resist and set ourselves against ourselves.

The basic question is why it is that man feels insecure with change. Why does this fear of insecurity reach its horror in the concept of death? Essentially it is thought or conceptualization that makes cowards of us, and the base of it is a misconception regarding the phenomenon of "time" or duration. The entire trouble is that we think we are *in* time and that we are subject to the vagaries of time. But truly we cannot be in time but necessarily outside it: if we were in the flow of the river of time, we could not possibly be aware of the flow; since we *are* aware of the flow, it must necessarily mean that as the experiencer we must be outside the flow of time. And "outside the flow of time", whether you consider it as a flow from the past to the future or from future to the past, can only mean intemporality. The only conclusion, therefore, can be that what flows in the stream of time can only be the phenomenal object, including the human psychosomatic apparatus, and, therefore, what we truly are is intemporality, immutability. What this means in effect is that it is only as a phenomenal object that the human individual "flows" from birth to death, from integration to disintegration, from appearance to disappearance; what we truly are is not phenomenal [138] but noumenon.

If this is accepted — that we cannot make sense out of life on the basis of anything fixed — then, life makes sense! Then, we accept that the very basis of life is flux and we get out of the vicious circle of fixity, not by trying to avoid change

but by plunging into it, by moving with it, by ~~joing~~ joining the dance and getting into the spirit of it all without trying to "make sense" out of the purposelessness of the swirling of the dance.

The fact of the matter is that whereas ~~The basic reason for his the feeling of insecurity is that we have confused "what is understandable" with "what is fixed". Whereas~~ life is in fact a continuous flow of events, we expect it to "stop" for a while so that we may understand it according to our fixed rules. ~~It is this that~~ This causes ~~an amount of~~ frustration and ~~an~~ a fear of insecurity; and it is this that is attempted to explain by the saying "time is the eternal healer". As a matter of fact, while we try to study and express the meaning of life in existing fixed terms and lables, many of the terms and lables themselves keep on changing; and where they do not, they lag behind and simply cannot understand or express the real things which are for ever changing both their shapes and contents. In short, while thoughts, words and labels ~~isolate~~ mean separation and isolation like the individual steps in a dance, life actually ~~itself~~ means change, movement and fluidity like the dance itself.

When man considers himself as a thing (body) ~~bounded~~ separated by a certain amount of skin in space, and limited by birth and death in time, he has ~~is~~ in actuality separated himself from the flow ~~form~~ of life because of conventional thought. He has forgotten that he is an intimate part of the flow of ~~life~~ life expressed in events which cover many supposed individuals, and that the flow of life is irresistible. In other words, to understand what life is all about, man must first feel the conviction that his mind cannot know its own source, the ultimate potential by whatever name

called; and, then, man must give up the feeling of a separate "me" as an autonomous entity, and accept the fact that, as a phenomenal entity, he is subject to the same force or energy that brought him
139 into the flow of life and will, in course of time, take him out of it. The sense of insecurity disappears when the sense of separation disappears.

The root of the frustration which the civilized man feels today lies in the fact that he lives not for the present moment but for the illusory future, the future which is only a creation of the brain and therefore a mere inference based on memory, an abstraction at best. It is the brain, or the divided or split mind, which creates the future whereas the *whole* mind knows no future for the simple reason that it does not conceptualize and lives totally in the present reality rather than any concepts about it. The whole mind knows only "what-is" whereas the split-mind working through the brain and its memory has created a "present future" which has a high degree of accuracy in so far as the ponderables are concerned, for example, everyone will grow old and will need an income in the absence of the ability to work, everyone will die, etc. The split-mind cannot handle imponderables.

It is clear then that the brain, with its fantastic memory bank, is an absolute necessity in order to live in this world. But the trouble is that the individual mind is a split or divided mind, and we cannot ignore the whole mind because the whole mind is the universal consciousness. Indeed, most physical processes concerning breathing, swallowing, digesting, circulating the blood, etc. are extraordinarily complex processes with which the brain has little to do. These processes are called "involuntary" and brushed aside as of little consequence. This is where the root of the whole trouble lies — the dichotomy created in the modern man between his brain (the cortex) and the rest of his body, between

the whole mind and the split-mind, between the "I" and the "me", between the impersonal or universal consciousness and the personal consciousness identified with the separate psychosomatic apparatus. In other words, we need both the brain thinking and the instinctive wisdom to lead a harmonious and well-balanced life, but what we have done is to allow the brain thinking to develop so quickly and so far forward that we have
140 almost forgotten all about the instinctive wisdom which has thereby slumped almost into atrophy. What we have done is to live in the future almost entirely, and have forgotten that it is the present moment which is the reality. The brain also understands that the "future" that it has created is relatively a very short time and that therefore it must cram all possible "happiness" in the present moment. There is thus a vicious circle: the brain, drawing on the memory, sees a future for which it must provide, and, at the same time, knowing that the future is uncertain and extremely limited in duration, it must cram as much as possible in the present moment. The result is a frantic attempt to satisfy, and even compel the senses, to absorb as much enjoyment as possible in the present while, at the same time, striving as hard as possible, to amass money which represents the power to command such pleasures in the future: to provide security! One mad race against time in which there is no time either to enjoy the present reality or the future illusion — "an affront to the wisdom of nature and a ruinous exploitation of the human organism as a whole."

In saying this, it cannot be forgotten that the brain with its calculating centres, its memory bank and its reasoning ability, is an

indispensable part of the human organism. The only point is not to let it run riot beyond its normal and proper function, which is to serve what is normally regarded as the real and the present, not to allow it to make its flights of fancy, conceptualizing the illusory future. Then consciousness can at all times be effortlessly witnessing every event and happening in the present moment, be aware of every experience in the present moment.

At this stage of the understanding, the mind begins to ask questions: the position is understood, but what do we actually do about it? But who asks the question? In deep sleep when the mind was inactive, there was neither the problem nor any answer. In fact, the problem was created by the very mind which now seeks an answer to the problem. If this is seen in the most vivid way — if one is consciously and wholly aware of the reality of the present moment without any concepts or judgment — it will also be seen that the only thing "to do" is to remove the unnecessary conceptual matter which prevents the seeing of the truth, not to create more such concepts. What is the truth? The truth is that it is futile to seek perfect security in a world whose very nature is changefulness, fickleness and fluidity! Indeed, such seeking in fact means wanting to be separate from the real world of flux, and it is this very separation which makes for the dreaded insecurity. One nation arms itself in order to achieve security and finds instant retaliation. Therefore any action other than the deepest awareness of the situation can only be counterproductive. The crux of the matter is to apperceive that the very concept of security is illusory. There is no such thing as security in this world, not even the security that we would be able to take our next breath!

There is the Sufi story of the sage who, in answer to his knock on the door of Heaven, was asked "Who is there?" and the sage answered, giving his

name and saying "It is I". The voice replied, "In this House, there is no room for thee and me". The door remained closed. After many years of meditation on this happening, the sage came a second time and the whole process was repeated. ~~And then~~ ~~But~~ And then again after further long meditation, the sage ~~s~~ realized the truth, and when he called the third time, his answer to the question "Who is there?" was "It is thyself!", and the door was opened. The sage had then indeed become ~~King~~ God.

A similar story concerns Lao Tzu and one of his disciples. The disciple came to Lao Tzu with his face radiant and said "Master, I have arrived". The Master was sad but ~~said~~ firmly denied that the disciple had arrived. The disciple went away disappointed. He returned after a few months again, ~~with~~ his face full of peace and contentment. He told the Master, "It has arrived". The Master looked at him and warmly embraced him.

The point is that the true understanding goes far deeper than an intellectual agreement. The understanding or conviction must reach a depth where the seeker of the security — the individual "me" as a separate entity — has disappeared. The understanding to be effective must stand on its own without the crutch of a "me". Such understanding can come only through constant and continuous awareness of our experience of the present moment — our thought, our desire, our feeling, our sensation — without prejudice, without memory, without judgment. The point is that the ordinary, normal experience whatever it may be, ~~has~~ disappears together with the disappearance of the moment in which it occurred, ~~and what is left is only a memory~~ but leaves a memory of it in the brain. In the experience as such there is truly no experiencer — no "me" — ~~which~~ to depend for its illusory existence wholly on the memory. ~~and the astonishing speed with which thoughts follow one another.~~ In other words, ~~such~~ an experience leaves no psychological scars.

It is of the utmost importance to avoid the mind — the "me", the ego — taking over at this stage and trying to obfuscate the true understanding by all kinds of questions at an intellectual level. It is of the utmost importance to realize that the "me", as a separate experiencer or thinker, is an illusion, that it the illusion which seeks security. To apperceive this fact — to accept this fact with unshakeable faith (not merely belief) — is to see in the plainest possible manner that life can only be experienced in each present moment, and that therefore in life there can be neither security nor permanence. To understand each present moment means to remain undivided from it (to be fully aware of it). It means realizing that in each present moment there is eternity, that it is only intemporality that can be aware of each moment in temporality.

What happens in moments of sheer joy or pleasure? We have no difficulty in being the experience of the moment by forgetting "ourselves" (the "me" is absent and there is only the joy of the experience). The mind remains whole and is not divided from the experience. The problem arises only when there is pain whether actual or imagined, and then the vicious circle of the split mind begins its course, with the effort of the "me" to escape from the pain and the consequent tension. A conscious relaxation of the entire body-mind releases the tension — and the pain — to an[14] astonishing extent. This conscious relaxation is the outcome of the awareness of the fear itself, together with the realization that tension can only make the pain worse. The fear is really based on the memory of past experiences and not on the past experiences themselves because those are dead. The relaxation is an expression of the willingness to accept the new experience without any mental resistance or reservation.

The relaxed acceptance of each new experience means in effect being totally sensitive to each new moment, with a whole, receptive mind. It is important and essential to bear in mind that this is not a pretty theory but an actual fact, open to experimentation: the unrestrained, relaxed receptivity to the everfresh new moment brings about, from the depths of one's beingness, unused natural reserves of power to absorb pain and relieve insecurity. This fact can be witnessed in many aspects of actual life: the "new" importance given to the natural system of giving birth; the very basics of judo and aikido; floating as against swimming against the current; the comparatively recent method of providing "give" in a building to withstand storms or earthquakes, etc. Next time you are in the dentist's chair, and he picks up his drill, consciously note how horribly tense your body is; then consciously relax the whole body and you will find that your mind has also relaxed and is receptive to the next moment, and that the actual pain is considerably less than what was conceptualized by the mind. What all this really means is that you will try to escape from pain or insecurity only so long as the "me" keeps itself separate from the experience: when this separation is healed by the realization that the pain is an inescapable experience, the brain experiences the pain in the same total "unselfconscious" way as it experiences joy. The pain as such cannot be escaped — the greater pain is the effort to get away from it. It is vital to realize that this is not a kind of trick to be used on special occasions; it is the very way of life — always to be alert and sensitive to the present moment which truly is never a new moment but one which is ever present as eternity.

14/ It should thus be clear that,

as Nisargadatta Maharaj never tired of repeating, understanding is all. There is no question of altering or amending the "what is". The what-is is merely to be seen with clarity, with alertness, without the obfuscation of thought and conceptualization. Therefore the very question of any method or technique is totally irrelevant. The Master can only say, "Open the window — there is the view". The question of how to see the view does not arise.

Thought, words, logic and reasoning are obviously necessary to lead a normal life but they do not constitute "living" by themselves because they are all based on memory of the known, and the split-mind (or, the mind divided by the intrusion of a "me"). To live, whenever possible, without thought, without words, is to be receptive to the unknown with the whole mind. Both are necessary but conditioning over a long period has brought man to the point where to recede into the whole mind is considered being lazy, a waste one's time! The development and use of the cortex has been lopsided. Men of genius, who have been the achievers in the world, have openly admitted that their most revolutionary ideas and inventions have "occurred" only when conscious thinking had ceased the mind was therefore receptive to the unknown.

The significant point, however, is that this suspension of thought — which is in fact the surrender of the split-mind of the illusory "me" — is not restricted to the great achievers of the world. It is possible for every human being who is prepared to see the what-is with an open mind without resorting to the dead past collected in memory, who is prepared to accept life as a reality to be experienced in the present moment and not as a problem to be solved at an intellectual level. In other words, although it may not be given to many to be prophets, it is certainly given to quite a few of us to see the what-is with the clarity of the whole mind and be sages.

enlightened sages. It should not be too difficult, given the necessary sincerity and determination, for an average person to understand life in a sense larger than the view of a split-mind me, and at the same time experience — at least at odd times — the ultimate Reality. This is possible, of course, only when the seeking is not based on the unreality of the known ~~and not~~ pursued through the illusory "me" as a separate entity. ~~because this simply means another seeking the same illusory security under another guise, the concept of a God.~~ Reality is not a discovery which will only confirm what is already known; ~~but~~ it is the vast unknown from which has arisen the little that is known to us.

Where have we arrived at this stage? We have come to realize that we do not really know what we want, that our wants are no longer our basic needs and have become our requirements. What is more, our requirements have become contradictory in the sense that we want to have our cake and eat it. We want security for the "me", which at once means keeping the "other" ~~out~~ out of my domain, for the "other" has become an enemy. And yet we also want, at the same time, brotherhood and universality! We want peace and prepare for war. Realization of this fact has also made us realize that problems arise and cannot cease if we look outwards from the viewpoint of the individual — whether as a person or a community or as a nation — and that our split-vision of the divided mind can heal only if we look at what-is from the viewpoint of Totality.

The healing of the split-mind into ~~a~~ the viewpoint of Totality necessarily means a radical transformation of our view of the world, a <u>subjective</u> experience of the organic unity

in the world. This subjective feeling of "I" as the centre of the universe can arise only when the objective illusion of the "me" against the "other" has totally disappeared. And the only way this can happen is when there is total acceptance of the ineluctable fact that I am <u>not</u> the master of my fate, nor am I the captain of my soul, that the "me" as a body is a mere object like any other object in the manifestation though it is injected with sentience and intellect. Man has no control on his birth nor on his death — nor in between. The only way the surrender can take place is to accept this fact and let go! Then, one carries on in life using one's natural talent to work its own way without the aggressive intent to "make things work".

Whenever there is the subjective experience of the "I"-feeling, there is necessarily the absence of the "me"-feeling of being separate, of being isolated, of being insecure. In the beginning, a certain amount of patience is necessary to sit quietly (without any specific purpose) and let the "me" get into the background along with the thought process so based on it, so that the inner experience of unity with the surroundings comes floating in. One must be clearly aware of the fact that the inner experience of unity is on quite a different level from the purely sentimental feeling of the poet for nature, which is entirely superficial. The true oneness includes the realization that it absorbs the bad and the creepy along with the good and the benign. The subjective experience of unity is not a "feeling" which bursts out into song, nor is it an unusual state of mind like a trance (hypnotic or otherwise) — it is an intensely deep experience defying verbal expression, indeed, quite impervious both to description and logic. As a Chinese Master put it "When you want to see into it, see into it directly; when you begin to think about it, you have missed it altogether." And when you have thus seen it, there is no need to tell the countryside about it from the housetop. It is enough to <u>know</u> that you see all that you see and all that you do not see.

It is a kind of traumatic experience — a transformation of one's being — to deeply realize that you really cannot be separate from the universe because what one calls "me" (illusory or otherwise) and the thoughts produced in that "me" are all intrinsic to the what-is. How then can one be separate? How then can one ever have any "security"? Any feeling of security must necessarily be a transient, illusory movement in the mind. Once there is the apperception of this indubitable fact, there happens the sort of "letting go" which the average man just cannot understand or even conceive because, by trying to stand outside himself, that is, outside his sensations and emotions, desires and feelings,
147 he has become an enormously confused entity, for whom life is nothing but continuous tension, frustration, conflict and disillusion.

When there is apperception of the totality of what-is the meaning of life becomes very clear: life is just a dance the purpose and meaning of which is only to dance, and when the dance is over, you are precisely where you were — on the floor. When you dance, there is no expection of anything to achieve. Before you started the dance, you were still and then there was movement when the dance began and when the dance ended, there was again stillness. You were born and the movement began; when you are dead, the movement will have ceased and "you" would be back in that state of rest which existed before you were born. It is the sense of "me" expecting, thinking, desiring, hoping, fearing, which deprives life of its meaning and gives death the significance which it really does not have. To the whole mind death is the unknown potential from which has arisen the birth and the life. To the whole mind death is just another moment in life,

complete in itself and unknown until it arrives.

Book ~~III~~ IV

Ultimate Understanding is Itself the Solution — the Final ~~the~~ Truth

How to Live One's Life

How to live one's life is really a misconceived problem inasmuch it presupposes that one is an autonomous entity with independence of choice and action, and that it is possible for one to live according to one's own sweet will and pleasure, depending on one's intentions and aims.

Only a little thought and an honest analysis of one's past life would clearly show that as an apparent entity man does not live his life but that he is being lived like a puppet. The attempt of a lived puppet to live what he mistakenly considers his own life is in essence not different from the attempt of a dreamed puppet to live his own life in a dream. The pertinent point is that for both — the lived puppet and the dreamed puppet — the attempts are the only "reality" they could possibly know, whereas in fact both are puppets and their attempts to live their lives are nothing more than reactions to impulses engendered by psycho-physical conditions over which they have no control; such conditions may be either inherent to the psychosomatic apparatus, or environmental or social or habitual, but the fact remains that the reactions to these conditions are what are considered "living one's life". The basic fact is that both the lived puppet and the dreamed puppet are essentially their sentiency — and not the physical form — and the sentiency of both is nothing but a reflex of the mind, a movement in consciousness which is all that they are.

It is the me-notion that is supposed to have volition and which believes that it is leading its own life. And that me-notion itself is merely a movement in consciousness, and therefore all its supposed acts of volition are nothing more

than a phantasy. The absence of the phantasy of dreaming denotes the bliss of deep sleep. And the absence of the phantasy of living denotes the bliss of the awakened or enlightened life.

What does this mean in the final analysis? It means that volition (how should one live one's life?) is not at all an effective element in phenomenal life because there is no entity as such to have any effective volition. It means further that an *apparent* act of volition can only mean an ineffective and vain gesture when in accord with the inevitable, and can resemble only the frustrated fluttering of a caged bird when in discord.

It is for this reason that Nisargadatta Maharaj used to say "understanding is all". True understanding connotes the abandonment of all volitional activity, and therefore factually means *letting ourselves be lived*, because then there is neither volition nor volitional non-volition (a deliberately inhibiting volition). The abandoning of volition is brought about by the understanding itself (and is not a deliberate act of volition), and the consequent absence of ego-activity leaves the mind open for the direct or intuitional apprehension so that the mind can function as whole-mind without the conceptual working of the split-mind of dualism.

Such intuitive non-volitional "being lived" is noumenal living which knows no suffering that is the dubious prerogative of the conceptual entity.

← Essence of the Teaching

The essence of the teaching of non-duality is contained in the assertion that there is a single immanent reality which is at once the source, the substratum and the true nature of everything that is manifested as the universe. This reality is directly experienced by every human being, indeed by every sentient being. Different names are given to this one reality, depending on the aspect which is referred to.

Perhaps the most common term by which this indivisible reality is known, is Self, the pure being, a subjective awareness of I AM, the sense of presence as such (not the sense of individual presence), without any subject-object relationship. There is only an awareness of being, a consciousness of existing and being present — and this is common to every sentient being. The direct experience of this consciousness comes about when the limitations of body-mind separateness are absent. This direct experience is what is traditionally known as Sat-chit-ananda (being-consciousness-bliss). The state of deep sleep, which every human being hankers for after being awake for a certain length of time, is but a pale reflection of this unbroken bliss because the deep sleep state alternates with the waking state and is therefore not unbroken. The beingness, the consciousness and the unbroken bliss are really not three separate attributes of the Self; they are one unitary experience, the three notional aspects being like the three inseparable properties of water: wetness, liquidity and transparency.

The Self is eternally present and always experienceable. Indeed, all there is is the Self, but the conscious awareness of it comes about when the self-limiting tendencies of the mind, the conceptualizing and the objectivizing, are not in operation. When these tendencies have totally ceased, the full light of the

Self shines forth in all its glory. This state is what is known as Self-realization.

The aspect of the Self, the power or energy that maintains the universe, is what is generally understood by the term "God", or "Shiva", or various other terms in the many religions, including the term "Brahman" used in Vedanta. In the teaching of non-duality, God is not a personal entity, the creator of the universe. The manifested universe is a mere emanation from the unmanifest source. The Self or consciousness is immanent in the manifestation because without it, the universe has no independent existence; at the same time, consciousness-at-rest (or the Self) is not affected by either the ~~[illegible]~~ appearance or the disappearance of the universe through the movement in consciousness, and it ~~is~~ therefore transcends ~~all~~ such manifestation.

The direct experience of the Self is known as _Jnāna_ or Self-realization. There is often an avoidable misunderstanding because the term _Jnāna_ is taken to mean that there is a _separate_ individual who has knowledge of the Self. It is astonishing how persistent this misunderstanding remains. Unless care is taken to understand the term _Jnāna_ in its full significance the spiritual aspirant will base his quest on a totally erroneous belief. The state of Self-awareness cannot come about unless the notion of a separate individual has been totally erased. In the state of Self-awareness there cannot exist ~~any~~ any particular individual knower of the Self. _Jnāna_ is a direct, subjective awareness of the one indivisible reality in which _Jnāna_ is not an object of understanding or experiencing, and in which the subject-object relationship has ceased to exist. In fact, although the term "Jnani" is used, for the purpose of

communication, to denote "one" who is firmly established in the state of Self-awareness, it must be clearly understood that the term "jnani" is in reality a misnomer inasmuch as the jnani is not to be taken as a separate individual.

Spiritual aspirants are notionally ~~generally~~ divided into three classes according to their capacity to receive and apprehend the teaching of non-duality: a) those in such advanced spiritual state (the evolution having perhaps been spread over many "lives" — though there is no question of any particular entity going through the evolution, because the "entity" is nothing but an illusory notion) that the apperception takes place as soon as the Guru explains the true nature of the notional individual in the notional universe; (b) those in the second category need to put in some efforts to understand the teaching in its full significance before Self-awareness can take place; (c) those in the third category need many years of spiritual instruction ~~practice~~ of one kind or another before they are ready for the final step ~~Self-realization can occur~~. Shri Ramana Maharshi used the simile of combustion to describe the three spiritual levels: a single spark is sufficient to ignite gunpowder, while a minimum amount of heat is needed for charcoal, and a considerable amount of work by way of drying and heating would be necessary before wet coal could start ~~begin to~~ burning.

153 For those aspirants at the higher spiritual level, it is sufficient for the Guru to explain that the Self alone exists, here and now, all the time. ~~and~~ All that is necessary for the Self to be experienced is for the notion of the not-self, the illusory individual entity that has been created by the mind (which is indeed the mind itself), to be firmly erased through a deep understanding of the what-is; ~~because~~ it is this illusory entity which acts like an eclipse on the Self. As soon as this primary misconception of the identity with the body is lost ~~given up~~, the entire mass ~~collection~~ of the wrong notions ~~which has been~~ obscuring the light of the Self vanish, and then

there is nothing to interfere with the continuous, unbroken awareness of the Self. At this higher level, as the ground has been already prepared, the question of conscious effort cannot arise. As Nisargadatta Maharaj used to say, all that is needed is the understanding that there is truly no "one" to achieve anything like enlightenment. All there is is the eternal Self, and all that is necessary is the unbroken awareness of that Self. And, what is most important, this awareness is most natural and spontaneous which already exists, here and now, and there is no question of any effort because there is no "one" to make any effort.

While there are a few spiritual aspirants at any one time ready to receive the Guru's instruction like a spark for gunpowder, there is a very large number of aspirants who are like wet coal and would therefore need considerable preliminary preparation to purify the mind in order to be able to receive *any* spiritual instruction. For this latter type at the lowest level, Nisargadatta Maharaj would recommend listening to spiritual singing (*bhajan*), counting beads and repeating His name, etc. In between these two extreme levels, is the class of aspirants who are neither the spiritual gunpowder nor the wet coal. These belong to the dry charcoal category who need a certain amount of discipline, a certain amount of spiritual heat to be prepared before the combustion can take place. It is for this middle class, that the practice of Self-enquiry is prescribed, the aim of which is to discover by direct experience — not merely at the intellectual level — that there is no such thing as a mind. The discovery relates to the fact that every conscious activity — whether of the body or of the mind — is inevitably based on the existence of the "me" concept. When it is further discovered, again by direct experience, that

the "me" is not an independent or autonomous entity but merely a mental modification, an illusory reflection of the Self, through the continuous and ceaseless use of Self-enquiry (which need not at all interfere with any work in hand), the "me" concept disappears along with all the conceptualization based on it. And then when this unnecessary obstruction is removed, Self-realization happens. In this state of enlightenment there exists no individual thinker, no individual observer, no individual doer, — indeed, no "individual" at all. All there is is the sense of presence as such — I AM. The absence of "me" is the presence of "I".

It is of utmost importance to understand the significance of this classification. The very basis of the teaching is that there is no such thing as an independent individual entity and that the supposed individual is merely a concept, a mental modification, an illusion. If this is clearly understood and accepted with deep conviction, it would naturally follow that enlightenment as such is merely a phenomenon, a happening that occurs as part of the totality of functioning in the universal play. It happens via, or through the instrumentation of a particular body-mind mechanism. The appropriate body-mind apparatus that presents itself at the appropriate time and place is also part of that happening named enlightenment. This can be apperceived only when the whole process of evolution culminating in the appropriate situation of enlightenment is viewed in an impersonal manner, without any identification with any particular aspirant in any class, either with satisfaction of being in a higher class or with disappointment of being in a lower one. And the real joke is that such impersonal viewing or perspective is itself part of the totality of functioning: it does not happen or come about until the "proper" time! Such impersonal understanding does not happen except at a certain higher level, and such higher level cannot be reached unless there is such understanding!! Such an apparent conundrum resolves itself when it is kept in mind

that all conundrums, all riddles, all apparent contradictions
15 exist only in the split-mind based on subject-object relationship, and resolve themselves at once as soon as they are viewed from the viewpoint of totality. Totality is when the illusory separate individual entity is not. When the individual "me" is absent, there can be no desire to change from "what-is" to "what-should-be" (from the individual's viewpoint) — then, at whatever level a body-mind apparatus may be in the evolutionary scale, there is no question of satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the witnessing of the subjective "I".

This most important aspect of the matter is often overlooked by the spiritual teacher who in his very exegesis unfortunately praises the "one" at the higher level and, directly or indirectly, sneers at the "one" at the lower level. He compares the aspirant at the top to a racehorse who puts in his best as soon as he sees the whip; whereas the aspirant at the lowest level will not be able to grasp the teaching "even if Shiva becomes his Guru", because he is like the horse who will not run even if he is badly whipped. Such a simile can only serve to strengthen the ego, the "me" concept. It has just happened as part of the totality that different aspirants exist at different levels in accordance with the Grand Design. There is no question of credit or guilt, success or failure, as an individual: the individual entity is an illusion. Of course, everything is part of the totality of functioning within the Self: both the Guru and the disciple are a part of the totality. And the totality of functioning is itself a dream within the consciousness. The fundamental Truth is that nothing has really happened: there is no creation, no destruction; neither free will nor predestination; neither path nor goal.

The primary and basic source of the "me" concept is identification with an object. The "me" does not exist independently of the objects

with which it is identified. It is the "me" which claims the association with all thoughts. If there is no thought, there is no "me"; and if there is no "me" there is no thought, no desire. The apparent continuity of the "me" is entirely because there is incessant conceptualizing, unceasing objectivizing — all based on desire in one form or another. All there is is the Self. The supervening "me" and its desires and thoughts, prevent the communion with the Self because this illusory "me" assumes the subjectivity of the "I". The whole purpose and aim of Self-enquiry is to focus the attention intensively and ceaselessly on the "I" so that the imposter "me" and his identifications are exposed. "To whom does this desire or thought occur?" is the incessant spotlight which relentlessly exposes the "me". The point is that the "me" concept itself — like all concepts — can only arise from the Self and, if not pursued, it subsides back into the Self. A continuous awareness of the falsity of the "me", and its thoughts and desires, focusses the attention on the source of all thoughts and desires and concepts — the I AM awareness of subjectivity, the consciousness, the impersonal sense of presence.

It is of primary importance to note that the final demolition of the "me" does not come about ~~not~~ by being aware of, or conscious of the subjective "I" because it can only be the furtive "me" who, as the pseudo-subject, is conscious of the object "I". But "me" can never be the subject and "I" can never be the object. It is only by being the subject "I", and by being the subjective awareness I AM, that the "me" gets annihilated. Any method that does not take into account this basic element ~~is bound to be not very~~ cannot be finally effective because any method that expects the "me" to undertake the relevant sadhana or spiritual exercises would only strengthen the "me" concept instead of eliminating it. Such methods would, of course, have certain results like quieting the mind or even produce certain blissful

experiences, but such experiences themselves hold the inherent hazard of mistaking these movements in consciousness to be the ultimate realization.

Once it is realized that every human being at any time is a point in the evolutionary graph line, it is simple to understand not only the existence of the various forms of spiritual teaching but the suitability of each for some people who are at a particular point. The saint says, "do not bother about anything else, just keep repeating the God's name whenever you find the time." Someone else says, "a visit regularly once a week to the Church or the temple or whatever is enough." Patanjali says, "make efforts (<u>Yama</u>, <u>Niyama</u>) and achieve <u>Prāṇāyāma</u>, <u>Pratyāhāra</u>, <u>āsana</u> — it may take time, it may take births, but Hatha-Yoga will get you there." And so on. Each has its place in the spiritual evolutionary scale.

It would be difficult, to find anything more direct, more confident (of course, only for those who happen to have the requisite capacity) spiritual instruction than that given by the sage Ashtavakra to his royal disciple, King Janaka:

> You are neither earth nor any of the other elements. You are the Self which is the witness of all these, the universal consciousness.
>
> If you dis-identify yourself from the body and remain in consciousness — I AM — you will be free from bondage <u>here and now, this instant</u>.
>
> You are neither of Brahmana nor of any other caste. You are not perceivable by the senses. Be happy in the knowledge that, unattached and formless, you are the witness of everything.
>
> Virtue and vice, pleasure and pain (and all other interrelated opposites) are of the mind. Being neither the doer nor the sufferer, you are for ever free.
>
> This alone is your bondage, that you see

yourself not as the witness that you truly are, but as something else.

You are that consciousness-bliss in and upon which appears superimposed this apparent universe.

You are immanent in this apparent universe and this universe has no other existence. Your
158 very nature is pure consciousness. Do not let your petty mind convince you otherwise.

For those who find this most direct approach difficult, the usual prescribed method is Self-enquiry, the basis of which is the focussing of attention on the inner feeling of "I" (not "me"), the sense of impersonal presence. In the early stages, the practice of Self-enquiry would necessarily be in the nature of an intellectual activity, but soon the intellectual perception of the "I" gives place to a subjective experience which is totally dis-identified from the objects and the relative thoughts. The final stage of the Self-enquiry is reached when an effortless awareness of I AM prevails, though not incessantly. Self-realization is, when this effortless awareness is incessant but the important point is that this state cannot be "achieved" for the simple reason that the "me" who is supposed to make the effort is on his way to annihilation. And this state of Self-realization is invariably sudden, though not necessarily a violent phenomenon. Possibly the clearest indication of it is the total absence of any doubt: any doubt or problem can exist only at the personal, individual level, never at the level of totality. When there is no doubt, there is no question of any guilt-feeling — whatever happens is part of the functioning of totality.

The essential significance of the continuous awareness of the I AM is, contrary to the general belief, is that it prevails irrespective of what one is doing. This is so because such awareness in effect means mere witnessing (without involvement) of whatever goes on. It

goes without saying that in such a state of awareness or witnessing, the practice of regular periods of meditation is irrelevant.

The practice of Self-enquiry or awareness or witnessing is a gentle, negative technique to get rid of the positive conditioning that has accumulated over a long period, and is totally different from the usually oppressive and repressive methods of controlling the mind. Curiously enough, the nearest it comes to any religious tradition is the method of surrender to God as a means of achieving Self-realization, or more accurately, liberation from bondage. The path of surrender is generally associated with Bhakti or devotional practices which are essentially dualistic in nature. The point that is often missed or ignored in such devotional practices is that the "me" concept, or the illusory individual entity gets stronger and stronger, and the separation between the individual and his "God" gets wider and wider, if there is a motive or purpose or a desire to be satisfied, behind the devotional practices. Even the desire for liberation or enlightenment will make the surrender incomplete or partial because the supposed individual makes an effort to get or achieve something in return: it would only be a business transaction; there is desire behind the efforts.

The only true surrender is when there is no "one" to ask questions or to expect anything. This means surrendering the total responsibility for one's life, for all one's thoughts and actions, to a higher power, God, or Self. Obviously, such self-surrender presupposes that one can not have any will or desire of one's own — which means in effect the acceptance of the fact that there is no individual entity with ability to act independently of God. This actually amounts to a constant awareness that it is only the Self that prevails and that the

357

supposed individual as such is truly an irrelevance in the totality of functioning. In other words there is really no significant difference between Self-enquiry and surrender because in both the "me" is finally to be isolated and annihilated.

The Basis of Self-Enquiry

Self-enquiry means enquiring into (a) the nature of the self, (b) the nature of the world, (c) the nature of Truth.

Enquire into the nature of Truth thus: you are ever free, why do you call yourself bound and then seek liberation? As the absolute noumenon, you are infinite — how and by whom could you be bound? You are not confined to the body. Whether the body is dead or alive, is of no concern to you. The relation between the body and you is like that of the cloud and the wind, or of the lotus and the bee. The wind becomes one with space when the cloud disappears; the bee flies into space when the lotus withers. Death does not affect you who are consciousness itself. It is your identification with the body as a separate entity which is the cause of your misery. Enquiry into the nature of the Self dispels this mistaken identity, and the very dispassion that starts this enquiry is sufficient to bring about the annihilation of that illusory entity, which has no independent nature of its own.

Such instruction from the Guru needs to be contemplated upon seriously: I am surely not this outside world which I can perceive as an inert thing. Nor am I the body created out of a single sperm cell, which seems to "live" for the briefest of moments in the river of time. I am thus not the form, nor the name which is only a sound, a mere movement in air, devoid of any independent existence. Nor could I possibly be the experience of any other sense like touch, taste, or sight or smell. What remains then? — peace beyond any thought! I can only BE that peace which is beyond all concepts and conceptualization.

It is as if a sudden recollection has dawned: I am the Self, omnipresent, the very source of all thought and experience, the inner light of consciousness because of which the entire manifestation arises and becomes perceivable and cognizable.

I am this Self, the ~~self~~ experiencing, the sole experiencer of everything, with a thousand hands and a thousand eyes.

This universe exists in me, the infinite consciousness like the reflection in a mirror. As the basic energy of consciousness I exist in all things that exist, as their very essence. I am the fragrance in flowers, the sentience in sentient beings. I am the noumenal transcendence and the phenomenal immanence in the entire manifestation.

I am consciousness without the slightest touch of objectivity or the slightest taint of any modification. What a joke! I who have never been bound, seek liberation! There is neither
16 / bondage nor liberation. There is nothing for me to acquire or to abandon. For me who has neither happiness nor misery, where is the question of meditation or non-meditation? There is nothing that I should do or not do. Let the spontaneous action take place whatever it be. I am the witnessing of it.

The notion of the existence of the universe can arise only when the spirit of self-enquiry is absent. "I" being present before the universe could ever appear, no notion ~~following~~ about the universe and anything or anyone therein could possibly concern this "I" that I am (and each one of us truly is). Whatever I may be engaged in doing in this life, I cannot be disturbed by any happening because I am beyond all duality and non-duality, as in deep sleep. It is as if I am in deep sleep although actively engaged in life.

In the peace and quietude of one's own inner being, ~~consciousness~~ the mystical vision of the universe appears & owing to the vibration of the consciousness. In the absence of the movement or vibration of the consciousness — when consciousness is at rest or in a state of abeyance as in deep sleep or under sedation — the universe cannot appear. In this appearance of the universe in consciousness, there is nothing other than consciousness. Nothing has any substance of its own, neither the world, nor the sentient and insentient beings, neither the Guru nor the disciple nor the instruction!

Movements in consciousness constitute the mind. While the realization of this basic fact means cessation of thought and conceptualizing — and indeed liberation from the bondage of the mind and the ego —, non-realization of this fact means the vicious circle of ignorance and mental activity, each strengthening the other in ever-increasing intensity. The essential point to understand is that ~~a deep understanding of the fact that~~ ~~all~~ any movement in consciousness creates thought and desire, and such movement does not distinguish / between the quality of the desire

which is irrelevant and immaterial. Every thought based on the ego means desire, and all desire strengthens further thought. The deep significance of this fact is two-fold: a) apperception brings about the cessation of desire, positive or negative, that is to say, the cessation of the desire to accept and the cessation of the desire to reject — the desire to accept the acceptable and the desire to reject the unacceptable; the desire to accept what the people will applaud and the desire to reject what the people might condemn. When there is apperception, there is the clear understanding that it is the energy of the consciousness which experiences all experiences.

b) the other point is that all desire means movement in consciousness, which is conceptualizing and therefore bondage, and desire includes even the desire for liberation! This is so because it can only be the ego which desires anything, including liberation. Awareness and apperception of this fact destroys the ego, and then enlightenment is apperceived as not a personal event but a happening in totality. Who is bound by whom — and who is liberated by whom?!

True happiness cannot arise until the identification with the body-mind apparatus is demolished. The mind recognizes its own illusoriness when it perceives the body as distinct from it and abandons its own conditioning in the form of various concepts. Mind and body are each other's enemies and there is suffering when they confront each other in mutual conflict.

It is ~~the mind~~ consciousness that gives birth, through its own ~~mental~~ cosmic energy, to the body, and the mind feeds it continually with its own sorrow generated by the various concepts, and on this basis the dualism of friend and foe is created — whatever gives pleasure is a friend and whatever gives pain is a foe.

The body in its own intelligence realizes that ~~the~~ it is the mind which creates suffering and unhappiness for it, and makes continuous effort
163 to get away from the mind. Both get tired of this constant conflict and succeed in getting away from each other during deep sleep when consciousness is absent. But such absence of consciousness as in deep sleep or under sedation is only temporary, and both body and mind continue to live and function together in the role of the illusory individual entity.

When death occurs, the body dies but the ~~th~~ mental conditioning in the form of thoughts, desires, ambitions, etc. remain in the totality of the Mind in consciousness, ~~which to be~~ as a point in the evolution of the total functioning, to be the cause of a fresh psycho-somatic mechanism to be created in due course. If, however, conceptualization ceases altogether and there is apperception of "what-IS" the existence of the physical body is of no relevance ~~and~~ because no relationship exists between ~~the~~ mind, body and senses. During the rest of its span, the psycho-somatic mechanism exists as a part of the totality of the functioning without any volition.

When the mind has become vacant through the total absence of all concepts concerning phenomenal existence, what remains is pure consciousness without any personal identification or notions of objectivity. This is the state brought about by apperception of "what-Is".

This is what is achieved by Self-enquiry which is not merely a matter of repeating "Who am I?" like a mantra, in which case it would not have much value. The aim of Self-enquiry is to focus the mind at its source to the exclusion of all thoughts and concepts. It is not at all a matter of the "me" searching for the "I", or the "I" searching for the "me". In one case the thief himself is appointed the policeman and seeks to find the thief, and in the other the "I" is not at all concerned with the "me". Also, it is not a matter of seeking the source of thoughts based on the "me" and wandering away into the source of particular thoughts into the realms of memory and perception. All this mental activity would belong to the "me" concept, the mind which itself is the thief trying to locate the thief. The point is that what is to be sought
164 is the source of the very "me" or mind, and not memory or perception which are the attributes of the mind itself. Perception or memory or any other experience, being only a modification of the mind, concerns the very "me" whose source is to be located through Self-enquiry. All memory, all experiences disappear during deep sleep.

You come from the same source in which you remained during sleep, except that whilst asleep you did not know where you remained. This is the reason the Self-enquiry must take place during the waking state. That which was present in your deep sleep, enabling you to say that you slept well or not, is your true Self; that which was ignorant in sleep the illusory "me".

Avidyā or ignorance arises on vidyā or knowledge like ripples and waves arise on the surface of the ocean, and avidyā dissolves in vidyā just like the ripples and waves dissolve in the ocean. There is truly no difference between the waves and the water; similarly, the distinction between ignorance and knowledge is notional and unreal. What exists when ~~the~~ ignorance and knowledge are no longer seen as two distinct entities, is Truth. The reflection of vidyā (knowledge) within itself is considered avidyā (ignorance), and when both these notions are abandoned, what remains is the Truth, phenomenally a void but noumenally the potential plenum or fullness. It is the reality in all things like the space within several pots. It causes cosmic movement and phenomenal manifestation without the slightest intention of doing so, because that is its nature, like a magnet makes iron filings move, merely by its presence, all together in one pattern.

Thus all phenomenal manifestation — ~~and~~ with all the sentient and insentient things in it — is really nothing but an appearance, an illusion. Nothing has really ~~be~~ been created as physical or material. When conceptualization ceases, all notions of being and/or non-being ~~are~~ disappear, and it is realized that all the supposed individuals with supposed independence and autonomy are merely empty expressions, and that all relationships that ~~give so~~ seemed so significant are truly ~~non~~ non-existent and imaginary. Even when the rope is mistaken for a snake, can one be bitten by such an imagined snake though it may appear very real?

Absence of self-knowledge is avidyā or ignorance or delusion. When consciousness objectifies itself and regards itself as its own object of observation, there is avidyā, or ignorance or delusion. When this

notion of subject/object relationship gets abandoned, what remains is reality or truth. Individuality is nothing but the personalization of consciousness resulting in what is known as the mind. So long as this personalization of consciousness remains, so long must remain the *notion* of an individual and his bondage. So long as there is a pot, there must necessarily be the notion of space within that particular pot. When the pot is broken, there is no enclosed space.

The fact of the matter is that all there is, is consciousness which is our true nature because as part of the totality of manifestation, we are nothing but consciousness which is immanent in all manifestation. What has happened is that a spurious or false "me" has arisen between the universal consciousness (which is immanent in all that is manifested) and the insentient body which imagines itself to be confined and limited to the particular body. What Self-enquiry does is to seek the source of this spurious or false "me" by centering on it the spotlight of attention or awareness and it vanishes at once because it does not have any independent existence and is merely an illusion. Whatever the religion or the sadhana, the basic aim has always been the elimination of this ego.

It should be evident from this that there are two selves in a man, a true Self and a false or spurious one. All that is conveyed, by whatever words that may be used, is the essential fact that by seeing the very illusoriness of the ego — the mind — the "me", one's true identity as the universal Self or consciousness gets firmly established. To see the Self — the universal or impersonal consciousness — is to BE the self; otherwise the "me" would not be demolished and duality would continue to remain.

Self-knowledge

~~This teaching~~ is not meant for those whose intellect has been deadened by a firm ~~faith~~ belief ~~in the~~ in the reality of the illusory entity in the phenomenal world, and thus pursues the illusory pleasures of the senses. ~~For~~ Such persons who have objectivised the phenomenal world in their mind, ~~is also destroyed~~ do not realize that it is the same illusory mind which also destroys the world. For such persons, there ~~there~~ is the notion of birth and death and rebirth.

The individual jiva who thinks it is born and will therefore die is nothing but the universal consciousness which has mistakenly limited itself to the ~~self~~ individual body and considers itself a separate entity — and therefore suffers pain and misery, and occasionally the supposed pleasure which has within itself the source of pain and misery. Every moment countless beings are born and countless others die, as the spontaneous acts of creation and destruction, of integration and disintegration; ~~which~~ this process is itself purely conceptual, the consequence of the thought I AM within the consciousness at rest.

Thus when objectivity arises in consciousness, the latter ~~itself~~ becomes limited and conditioned — that is bondage. When, as a result of the apperception, the objectivity is lost, consciousness becomes free of conceptualization and thought — that is liberation from the bondage. When there is apperception, the ~~seer~~ see-er and the seen are perceived as the two interrelated ends of the natural process of SEE-ING which is what ~~you~~ we are. There is no entity in such noumenal or subjective seeing. Similarly there is no experiencer and ~~no experienced~~ nothing experienced — ~~you~~ we are the functioning called experience-ING.

167

For the quieting of the mind there is no other means more effective than Self-enquiry. The mind may subside by other means, ~~but~~ but it will rise again. Self-enquiry is a direct method; other methods are practised by retaining the ego and therefore many doubts arise and the ultimate ~~question~~ hazard still remains to be dealt with. In self-enquiry, from the very beginning it is only the final question that is tackled.

Self-enquiry alone must be considered the direct path to Self-realization by removing the ~~obstacles~~ obfuscation that covers the never-unrealized Self. Such ~~obstacles are~~ obfuscation is itself the creation of mind and most other methods retain the mind as the basis of the method. To ask the mind to destroy the mind which turns outwards is "like making the thief the policeman", or to put the arsenist in charge of the fire engine! the only way to make the mind cease its outward activities is to turn it inward.

By steady and continuous investigation into the nature of the mind, the mind gets transformed into That to which the "me" owes its existence. ~~But~~ The mind has necessarily to depend on something gross for its existence. Identification with the body as a separate entity is what "mind" or "ego" is — as "me". It is only after the "me" arises that the "you" and "he" and the other personal pronouns arise. It is for this reason that the source of the "me" is to be sought by self-enquiry.

The mind turned outwards results in thoughts and objectivizing. Turned inward, it destroys all other thoughts, and the "me" concept finally destroys itself "like a stick used for stirring the burning funeral pyre itself gets consumed".

Duality exists in ignorance.

All phenomenal objects are Brahman
because Brahman is immanent in all phenomenal objects.
Therefore, both passion and dispassion, craving and aversion
are mere notions. Duality exists only in ignorance. The
mind, the intellect, the ego-sense, the cosmic root-elements,
the senses and various other phenomena can only be
Brahman. A single sound diversifies itself into echoes
168 and re-echoes within itself. The universal conscious-
ness, experiences multiplicity within itself, precisely as a dreamer
dreams of diverse characters of diverse ages, in diverse circumstances,
along with the notions "me" and "mine", "not-me" and "not-
mine".

Body is Brahman, life is Brahman, death is Brahman too. When death-Brahman comes to meet body-Brahman, where is the cause for sorrow? Just as water, in its nature, could be calm or in movement as ripples or waves, Brahman can also be at rest or in movement. The man with wisdom makes no distinction between sentient matter and insentient matter. What is observed as body and what is regarded as notions, objects of cognition, the perishable and the imperishable, thoughts and feelings are the manifestations of Brahman in the infinite consciousness.

When gold, heavily coated with earth, is not recognized as gold, it is ignorance precisely as it is ignorance when Brahman is not recognized as such in its multiplicity. Either way, whether Brahman is recognized as such or not, Brahman will in any case remain Brahman like gold is gold whether it is recognized as such or not. The only apparent or notional difference is that when ignorance is dispelled, it is regarded that gold "becomes" gold and Brahman "becomes" Brahman!

The truth is simple: All things exist in Brahman, all things flow from Brahman, all things ARE Brahman because Brahman is all there is.

It must be clearly understood that whilst intellectual argument may be used and may even be necessary at the initial stage in the process of Self-enquiry, the argument itself is not Self-enquiry.

The argument could run as follows: The food-body (annamayakosha) and its functions are obviously not "I". The body ages and dies, but "I" can feel myself ageless and changeless. Then again, the mind (manomayakosha) and its functions are also not "I" because the mind is merely a conglomeration of thoughts; and all thoughts are based on the "me" concept. That which is aware of the thoughts is the individual, the "me", who functions as the operative cognizer of the existence of thoughts and their analytical sequence. Who or what is this "me" and what is its source? The "me" cognizer as the intellect (Vignanamayakosha) is not an independent entity.

The "me" did not exist in deep sleep, and when it did, deep sleep changed either into a dream or the waking state. Who is this "me" in the waking state, who did not exist in deep sleep and was therefore steeped in ignorance? And such an ignorant "me" could not possibly be the subjective "I" who always here and now, who therefore exists, in all the three states of sleeping, dreaming and waking, totally unaffected by the qualities of these states, as the eternal substratum, the witness.

The "me" that sleeps in ignorance is the same "me" that thinks and acts in the waking state as if it is a separate entity. What is that substratum because of the presence of which the "me" has the feeling of being present as "I", even though the feeling is a false one? The point is to find out its origin and stay there. A persistent and ceaseless questioning will dissolve the "me" into that "I".

"I" am the perceiver of this outside world which is inert, comprising trees, mountains and rivers. Nor can I possibly be this body which also I can perceive, which was created out of a drop of sperm and which lives for a very brief moment in relativity. I am not sound (word or expression or name) that is cognized by the inert substance that the ear is, which has neither form nor existence and is but a mere momentary movement as a sound wave in the atmosphere. Similarly I cannot be any of the other senses — sight, taste or touch — because they too have no identity, and function only when consciousness is present. I can therefore only be that omnipresent self in which there is no conceptualization, the inner light because of which alone all the senses in all the sentient beings can experience their objects, because of which objects acquire their apparent substantiality, because of which the sun has his heat and light, the moon its cool light, the mountain its heaviness, and the water its liquidity, because of which manifestation appears, is perceived and is cognized.

This one self, the inner light of consciousness, being itself the functioning of experiencing, is the only experiencer, and is therefore known as the self with a thousand hands and a thousand eyes. And as this Self or infinite consciousness, I am man, I am woman; I am young, I am old. I am the fragrance in flowers. I am the radiance in the light. I am the experiencing in all that is experienced. I am the very essence, the suchness in all things in the manifested universe. It is I that exist in all that exists, like sweetness in sugar, like liquidity in water in the same way that butter exists in milk.

I am infinity. I am intemporality.

Ramana Maharshi has described the Self-enquiry as the direct method of "diving into the Heart", seeking the source of the "me". He has made it clear that the meditation "I am not this, I am That", while being useful, is not itself the means of finding that source.

Once it is accepted that the "me" is a mere concept, all that remains is to locate the source in which the "me" concept arises. Meditating on "I am That" can only strengthen the ego. The Upanishadic text "Thou art That" is merely a piece of information that it is Self experienced in the egoless state which is the supreme Reality. This Reality is to be experienced through the proper method; the "me" when exposed through direct Self-enquiry vanishes and merges into its source which is the I AM consciousness.

Once it is realized that the Self, the I AM consciousness, which is what we Really are, is not the doer but merely a witness, it would be seen that it is not only not necessary to renounce our daily activities but that it is desirable to continue our normal life, with the deep understanding that we are "being lived" in the totality of the functioning of the manifest and that the supposed doership of the "me" is nothing but an illusion. The normal daily activities, continued without a sense of doership, would indeed mean the best possible preparation for sudden enlightenment.

The basis of the quest for the Self is the firm conviction that there is no dual identity of the "I" and the "me", so that whenever the "me" thrusts itself on any activity, the mere awareness that the "me" is a phantom, an illusion on the I AM consciousness without any substance of its own, is sufficient to drive it away — no positive action is necessary.

The deer is trapped by the sound of music and bells, and the male elephant by the proximity of the female; the fish gets caught by the sense of taste; the moth destroys itself by being attracted by the sight of the flame; and the bee, attracted by the perfume of the flower, gets trapped in it and dies. Each of these perish because of only one craving, but you have subjected yourself to all the five temptations — how can you possibly find true happiness? The mind weaves a web of concepts and percepts, and then gets caught in it like the silkworm in its own cocoon. O mind, if you keep up your flow outward towards the sense objects, there is nothing but sorrow for you. Turn yourself inward, and you will rest in your beingness in peace and tranquility.

But why, O mind, do I instruct you in this manner? Have I not investigated into the nature of the self and found out for myself that there is no such thing as the mind, that the mind is nothing but the illusion that has arisen because of the false identification of consciousness with the individual body-mind mechanism? O mind, there is no relationship between us — how can there be any relationship between the infinite consciousness that I AM and you who are nothing but the illusory ego?

The infinite self cannot be squeezed into the mind just as an elephant cannot possibly be accommodated in a little fruit. It is consciousness itself, by limiting itself to an individual body-mind mechanism, loses its universality and becomes susceptible to conceptualization and is then known as mind.

The nature of Self-enquiry is often not clearly understood. The enquiry "who (or what) am I?" really means an effort to find the source of the ego, and this effortless effort leads to the apperception of Truth. The intention is not to occupy the mind with other thoughts like "I am not the body". In fact the practice Self-enquiry begins after the theoretical intellectual analysis is over. Seeking the source of the "me" means in effect not replacing one thought by another, but getting rid of all thoughts. The attention is fixed on finding the source of the "me" concept by enquiring, whenever a thought arises, to whom that thought occurs. The answer would be "to me", so that then you resume the awareness of the Self.

Self-enquiry as such is something quite different from the introversion of the psychologists, because it is not a mental process at all. Introversion means investigating the contents and the composition of the mind whilst the purpose of the Self-enquiry is to probe behind the mind to the Self which is the source from which arises the mind or the ego or the "me" concept. Self-enquiry concerning the source of the "me", who considers itself in bondage and seeks freedom therefrom, results in knowing one's true nature — and this is the only Liberation.

Similarly Self-enquiry differs fundamentally from any kind of psychiatric treatment because the latter merely aims at producing a normal, integrated individual whereas Self-enquiry aims at transcending the bounds of the human individual as such. The only common ground is that both bring up hidden thoughts and impressions buried in the depths of the mind. The point is that these thoughts spring up spontaneously and, when thus exposed, are promptly extinguished.

The problem that persistently arises and bothers most seekers is: If "I" am truly the infinite consciousness, how is it then that this finite limitation of the illusory entity, the ego-sense has arisen at all in That infinite consciousness? What has given rise to this "me-and-the-other" separation which is the cause of all bondage and misery?

The infinite consciousness is the source that gives the light to the sun and the moon, the energy that animates everything that is sentient in the universe, and provides the infinite variety in the manifestation of the universe. This infinite consciousness which is immanent in the three aspects of Time, and witnesses the functioning of the entire universe, identifies itself with each psycho-somatic apparatus, in order to provide the Lila, the dream of living, so that each human being assumes for himself the subjectivity of the universal consciousness. Thereafter, the personal consciousness assumes autonomy, independence and choice of decision and action for each human being — and thereby suffers the alternating experiences in duality of pleasure and pain. When the personal consciousness realizes its universality, it sees the Lila, the enormous joke underlying the Lila, and sees living for what it is — a great dream —, and then all experiences in temporal duality, all the separations between the pseudo-subject and its objects (the "me-and-the-other" concept) disappear into the phenomenal void.

When delusion and confusion are gone, and the truth is realized by means of self-enquiry, when the conceptualization ceases and the mind is at peace, when the heart suddenly opens itself to the supreme truth and is filled with the bliss of the absolute, then there is no more restless seeking for the supposed liberation, and this very world is realized as an abode of bliss. Direct experience alone is the basis of all proof, the

direct experience of "what-is" which needs no illustrations ~~for the understanding~~ as are required by mere intellectual understanding. And illustrations have the inherent danger of being misinterpreted because they are necessarily based on temporal duality whereas "what-is" is infinity and intemporality. In ~~the~~ direct experiencing, there is total absence of the triad of comprehender, the thing comprehended and the process of comprehending.

The ego-sense, with all its differentiation of me-and-the other in ~~a~~ space-time arises when consciousness becomes "aware of the savour in salt, the sweetness in sugar and the pungency in the chillie". It arises when consciousness becomes aware of the nature of a rock, a mountain, a tree, a river. It arises when the multifarious combinations of particles and molecules are seen in consciousness as objects of the pseudo-subject, instead of as mere appearances or reflections within itself. In reality there is no subject-object relation because in all combinations consciousness is immanent therein.

The dream of phenomenal manifestation arises in the phenomenal void because that void is not a dead nothingness but is indeed the fullness of throbbing potentiality. From the potentiality of the unknown arises the actuality of the known. When this is realized, the huge joke in the phenomenal Lila can be enjoyed; when not understood, "life" becomes the misery of Samsara.

There is basically no difference between the waking state and the dream except that the one seems more stable than the other. The contents of both states ~~of~~ and the experiences suffered in both states are of a homogeneous nature. The important and significant point is that the dream itself is regarded as the waking state during the process of the dream and therefore as stable as the waking state. It is only after there is awakening / 175 from the dream that there is realization that what we considered as the waking state was only a dream. Similarly, it is only after there is an "awakening" in the form of enlightenment, that there is realization that this waking world is indeed a long dream. The seeming permanency of the waking world is really as much of an illusion as the dream because in a dream what later (on awakening) is realized as a brief moment is experienced by the dreamer as a life-time or an episode lasting a long time.

Just as the body appears very much real, and the pains and sufferings quite unbearable, in a dream, similarly in what we regard as the waking state what seems a solid body and the sufferings which seem so poignant are due to a mental predisposition, a movement in consciousness, and therefore an illusion.

When there is realization that the world that appears so real is merely a reflection of our own true nature, all fear and delusion vanishes.

The notion of bondage and liberation are merely modifications of the mind. As they do not

have any independent existence, there is no question of their functioning on their own. But the point is that the very fact of their being modifications suggests that there must be something here and now, something autonomous and independent as the substratum, as their common support and source. Self-enquiry throws up the fact that the terms ~~and~~ "bondage" and "liberation" refer only to the "me" concept, and the "me" cannot exist except as a mere concept. That which remains when the "me" disappears, ~~the~~ is the substratum of all that is manifest, all the thought and all the action. When the mind is ceaselessly directed towards the source of "me" without any externalizing or objectivizing, then the vivid realization of this supreme Truth, this Reality comes about so very naturally and spontaneously that there is a sense of wonder ~~that~~ about the simpleness and ~~ordinarily~~ ordinariness of the happening.

176/ The Self that is sought through Self-enquiry is already realized. This fact must be clearly borne in mind because if the realization is something that is "caused" through the enquiry, such realization would be ~~[illegible]~~ necessarily time-bound like all items in duration. But surely realization is not worth seeking if it were not eternal. Therefore what is sought is not something that is to be created, but something that already exists as eternity and infinity but is hidden by obstructions. Ignorance is the obstruction. Once the ignorance (~~[illegible]~~ together with its interrelated counterpart "knowledge") is removed through Self-enquiry, the Truth will shine of itself. The "me" concept is the ignorance, and as soon as its source is located, it must disappear because it has no independent existence.

The nature of consciousness is such that it can simultaneously pervade the past, present, and future and experience ~~the~~ infinite universes. It experiences the interrelated opposites, like what is sweet and what is bitter, at the same time because it is what remains when all interrelated opposites are superimposed and cancel or negate one another — the tranquility and peace of the conceptual phenomenal void, but truly the potential plenum. ~~The~~ Consciousness is, by its very nature, free from all concepts, percepts and modifications, it is ever at peace, and never loses its homogeneity even when apparently experiencing the diversity in the phenomenal objects.

When ~~the~~ the infinite consciousness limited itself by identification with an individual body-mind, ~~it~~ its perception of the three modes ~~of~~ or periods of time also started and thus arose the concept of bondage. When the personal consciousness realizes its true nature (which was apparently veiled by conceptualization and objectivization), and abandons the concept of time as something apart from itself, it is freed from the bondage of the dualism of "me" and "not me" which is the very basis of conceptualization. ~~In other words,~~ The apparently transformed becoming is
(7) freed (7) from sorrow when it returns to That being which has not undergone any modification through conceptualizing; and when what is ~~not is seen~~ absent is realized by what is present, what is present loses its apparent dualistic wickedness.

One of the difficulties expressed in regard to Self-enquiry is: Self-enquiry is supposed to be a ceaseless one, but how can one sit in meditation all day — even if one could do so — and yet carry on one's daily routine? This question is basically related to the fact that the Self-enquiry is usually associated with the word "meditation" at regular times, sitting cross-legged on the floor with a straight spine, eyes closed, and attention centred on the "I Am", the sense of being alive and present. But the fact is that while this is indeed the usual posture and course for meditation as such, it is not, for Self-enquiry, of as much importance as it is supposed to be for other less direct methods. It is a fundamental part of the process of Self-enquiry that it is not to be restricted to any set hours of meditation (which could give it the feeling of a spiritual "drill") but that it has gradually to be extended throughout the waking hours until it becomes "the undercurrent of all thought and action".

Self-enquiry is not so much the positive aspect of doing some sadhana, but rather a negative aspect of letting the mind subside by seeking its source. It may begin with positive meditation at fixed times, but what happens is that as the enquiry proceeds, the undercurrent of enquiry begins to awaken spontaneously and spreads gradually to all activity without intruding or forcing itself on the main activity.

Such ceaseless awareness of the working of the mind would ultimately take the form of witnessing whatever happens without any choosing or judging, so that the intruding thoughts are cut off as soon as they occur. When conceptualizing is thus nipped in the bud, undiluted attention gets centred on the activity in hand leading to much greater efficiency, and less 178/ and less interference from the "me". Thus is achieved true meditation even during the daily activity.

The tree within the seed cannot grow out of it without destroying the seed, but whereas the tree and the seed are material substances, Brahman is formless and nameless. There is nothing other than Brahman; whatever may appear therein which seems to be of a different nature, it is Brahman and nothing else.

The see-er is not realized so long as the self is seen as the object. One does not realize the self-nature so long as the objective universe is perceived as such. This is because unless the duality is seen for what it is, that is to say, a mere medium in which the phenomenal manifestation may be perceived and cognized, and not an actuality, the subject/object division would persist and the unicity of Brahman would not be realized. If you persist in seeing the mirage as water you would never see the truth of what makes the mirage appear; but if you perceive the truth that it is the hot air that makes the mirage appear like water, the delusion of the water disappears.

It is only when the separation between the see-er and the seen is surrendered that ~~it~~ the realization occurs that ~~the seer~~ see-er and ~~the~~ seen are merely the two necessary interrelated components of the function of SEEING. And, vice versa, when realization has happened, the separation between subject and object disappears and only the functioning remains.

In *Ramana Hridayam*, Ramana Maharshi says, "The Quest," Who is he to whom belong actions, separateness (from God), ignorance or separateness (from Reality), ~~who~~ is itself the Yogas of action, of devotion, of right understanding and of mind control. That is the true state (of the Self) — the untainted and blissful experience of one's own Self — where the seeker, the "me", being demolished, these

179 eight have no place."[179] — The four defects and the four remedies of Yoga.

The four Yogas are based on the false identification of the seeker with the ego, which results in the attributing to the Self one or the other defect that appears in himself. The Yogi of Action pursues his yoga with the intention of neutralizing the actions of the Self as the doer of actions. The Yogi of devotion proceeds on the basis that he is someone other than God and needs to become united with Him by devotion. The Yogi of right understanding intends to remove from the Self the ignorance which he thinks has enveloped the Self. The Yogi of mind-control considers the Self to have been separated from Reality and seeks reunion by the control of the mind.

These are wrong assumptions because the very fundamental Truth is that the manifestation of the universe is itself an illusion, and the individual self is merely a part of that illusory world. In other words, the Self has always been free and perfect, without the faintest taint of bondage. The seeker of the self starts with this knowledge, and, through the Quest, experiences the true Self. ~~without~~ And, in the total absence of the "me", ~~without~~ there are neither the four defects nor the four remedies (prescribed by the four Yogas).

← The Beginning of the End of Bondage —

If it is accepted that the individual is merely an appearance in consciousness, and that every thought, every action, every event is a movement in consciousness, and that therefore ~~an~~ a supposed individual, ~~[illegible]~~ a mere phenomenal object, cannot be considered a cause of any event whether considered "good" or "bad" — then the question would arise: to whom do the Masters, and the various scriptures in every religion, address themselves? To whom do their words, their pointers, their injunctions apply? If this is merely a superficial query at the intellectual level, the discussion could go on indefinitely with philosophical arguments and counter-arguments. But if the question persists with a nagging intensity that amounts to a burning problem which refuses to ~~let one~~ let go, ~~[illegible] peace~~, then it truly means the beginning of the end of the supposed bondage. Indeed, it may well mean much more than a mere beginning. It may truly mean the very end of bondage because, when the answer flashes with a spontaneous conviction that needs no ~~[illegible]~~ support from any external source, the very problem of bondage gets dissolved, suddenly and instantaneously.

The answer, of course, is that since there cannot be any individual as a separate autonomous entity, the problem itself vanishes, when it is realised that ~~because~~ it was created by thought, and therefore was merely a concept with no substance. To a conceptual problem there cannot be any valid answer except to ~~by~~ see the problem in ~~the true~~ perspective.

Actually, what has happened is that the problem has arisen like a phantom because the premise on which it was based was not understood in its real, deep, significance. What has happened is that the illusoriness of the phenomenal world — and everyone

and everything therein — is accepted at the intellectual level, but such acceptance of the illusoriness of the manifest world does not include the "me" who is asking the question! And this is what is pinpointed when the answer suddenly and spontaneously flashes into consciousness. This flash of understanding demolishes the "me" who was standing apart from the illusoriness of the rest of the world and asking the question, and with the "me" go all its problems. This flash of understanding makes a joke of the entire problem of bondage and emancipation: there is the sudden realization that all the "me"s (and "you"s) are merely the objective expression of the subjective "I". This sudden realization often explodes through the human apparatus in the form of uncontrollable laughter at the primeval joke that is Maya — which might transform itself into such compassion (love) that a most painful need could arise to be able to embrace the whole world.

18/ So long as this flash of understanding has not occurred, the logical question would be: what is to be done to "acquire" this flash of understanding? Again, the only answer is a counter-question: Who wants to know?* When Nisargadatta Maharaj asked this question to a visitor, many felt (including the regular visitors) that Maharaj was evading the question. He was not. The counter-question was the only answer. The one who is asking the question is the illusory individual ego. And the illusory ego who has no real existence is not capable of "doing" anything to "achieve" anything. The sudden flash of understanding can occur but spontaneously "from outside". It is a sudden leap from temporality into intemporality, from finitude into infinity. It can only happen as a sudden movement in consciousness, in relation to which the human being concerned is merely an instrument

through which the understanding happens. Does it mean then that the human being, as an individual, has no active participation except as an apparatus? That is precisely so. Of course, the event known variously as enlightenment, awakening, freedom etc., can occur only when the time and place and the apparatus are in precise readiness to receive the happening. And also, of course, the event, as being within relative temporality, is governed entirely by the totality of functioning; and, as such, consciousness, in which everything happens, is not governed by any rules and regulations. The event is a part of the grand divine design, and the relevant apparatus, and the time and place, all form a part of the complex evolution in which every human being forms a link. Whether it is art or science or politics or economics or spirituality, every event takes place inexorably at the precise moment — and in that moment, every moment, the totality of functioning is in perfect balance. Everything is perfection in every moment — here and now.

When this realization is absorbed in every pore of the human apparatus, the "me" — the personal identification — vanishes; the apparatus becomes a vehicle of the universal consciousness; the unnecessarily assumed burden of the illusory volition of the illusory autonomous individual disappears. And all that then remains is a sense of presence without the person, which gets translated in actual life as a sense of total freedom.

No rational or logical explanation is possible in regard to the totality of functioning and the ways of Providence, because the divided mind which functions in the duality of life is incapable of understanding the whole-mind or consciousness which is its own source. The shadow cannot know its own substance. An Einstein does not occur suddenly. The brain capable of receiving the theory of relativity "from outside" (as Einstein has himself said) could not possibly have been developed

in one lifetime. The conditions necessary in a human apparatus to be able to produce the Jnaneshwari and the Amritanubhava at the age of sixteen, could not have been produced in a Jnaneshwar in one life-time. The conditions necessary for sudden enlightenment are produced after several lifetimes, but ~~they~~ the series of lifetimes necessary for the final event of self-realization do not occur to any single "soul" or entity, for the simple reason that all there is at any moment is nothing but consciousness, and no sentient being ~~has~~ can have any volition or independence of choice and action because there is no such thing.

The course of evolution is seen all the time in life. There are some people who are so absorbed in chasing what they consider as "happiness" that they do not have either the time or the inclination to stop and wonder if their kind of happiness is truly worth having. At the other end of the scale we find people who have fully realized what life is about. In between the two ends, we find people at different points in the conceptual stream of evolution. Until discrimination and dispassion arise, it is no use trying to get anyone interested in spirituality — he will not be interested. Once the turning point occurs, once dispassion arises, then
183 the personal identified consciousness — never the illusory individual — turns inward towards its true nature. Then self-enquiry begins, and thereafter, when conditions are suitable in a particular human apparatus (which could take many, many lives — but not of the same individual "soul" or whatever name may be given to this illusory entity), the event will occur ~~to~~ which is known as enlightenment.

The turning point, the turning of the thoughts towards the source, is itself a spontaneous happening over which the supposed individual has no control in any ~~sense~~ manner or form. It is a part of the dream-play that is called life, — the totality of functioning.

Dispassion arises when the heart persistently begins to question the validity of what is considered as "happiness" which seems to be based on material objects which do not have any kind of consistency or permanence. The same objects which appeared to bring happiness at one time, bring unhappiness at another, and mind seeks other objects which too suffer from the same deficiency. Pleasure and suffering come about from subject/object relationship which is based on certain sentient objects ~~+~~ coming together purely by chance. All happiness and ~~[illegible]~~ misery, based on the desire for certain objects and on the relationships with other sentient objects, seems to abide in the mind and the mental attitude. And mind itself is illusory and unreal, and disappears totally in deep sleep and under sedation.

~~Such~~ Dispassion gives rise to an insistent ~~demand~~ need to know the truth: What is this world which appears when we are awake and disappears when we are in deep sleep; what is it that is born, grows and dies? What is lasting happiness and how does one get it? What is this thing called Time which consumes everything in this world, and what is its essential nature? Yesterday's mountain is today's crater, today's fertile plain will become an arid desert tomorrow.

Is there a state in which it is possible not to experience any grief? Is it possible to live in this world and still maintain peace and contentment? Is it possible to live and still keep away from the current of love and hate?

What precisely is liberation, upon attaining which one is supposed not to experience sorrow and to escape from ~~it~~ birth and death? Would it then be possible to live in relationship with others,

and yet keep away from the modifications and perversities of mind?

184. 184/ True dispassion is not brought about by austerity or by pilgrimages or by conscious good deeds, but only by directly apperceiving one's true nature. The earliest stirrings of dispassion can arise only through what might be called divine Grace, which, in reality, means a condition of the psychosomatic mechanism (the supposed individual) gradually evolved through many "lives" (not necessarily of the same individual "soul"). These early stirrings might arise suddenly and spontaneously, but more often an apparent cause was located in some serious difficulty in life or a sudden bereavement in the family.

When dispassion persists and matures, it gradually transforms itself into the spirit of self-enquiry, which in its turn strengthens dispassion. Indeed, dispassion, self-enquiry and self-realization together form an inseparable combination.

The individual *jiva* is nothing more substantial than the limiting of the universal consciousness by identification with the physical form — a mere movement of thought giving rise to the concept of "me" and "mine". This sense of dualism or separation not being its natural state, consciousness begins the search for unity which actually means consciousness as the "me" searching for itself (as the unity) as an object! When mind perceives duality, there exists non-duality only as its counterpart. When the perceiving in duality ceases, there is neither duality nor non-duality. When conceptualization ceases, and there is "at-one-ment" with consciousness, noumenal peace prevails, whatever the psycho-somatic mechanism may be doing in whatever circumstances.

In order to get rid of concepts like "me-and-mine" and notions such as "I am born" and "I shall die", which is the base of bondage, the remedy lies in self-enquiry which brings about the wisdom that annihilates identification. Any positive efforts
155 would be as futile as trying to see one's face in a mirror, reaching it after violent efforts that leave one gasping in front of it — the heavy breathing would keep the mirror misted. It is only direct self-knowledge that arises after self-enquiry into the movements arising in one's consciousness, which acts as the Sadguru, the supreme preceptor. All efforts made by a supposed entity can only lead to frustration. It is only the effortless effort (passive witnessing) along the pathless path (pure understanding without a "me" as the comprehender) which can lead to the goalless goal ("That" which has always been here and now).

The question of human effort in relationship to the arising of dispassion that leads to divine Grace, which in turn leads to the "path" of liberation has always been a puzzling matter. The Masters say that divine Grace can only happen and cannot be demanded as a recompense for human effort. And yet they say that without human effort nothing can be achieved. In other words, if what is destined to happen will happen, is there any use in prayer or effort or should we just remain idle? What is actually meant by these apparently contradictory facts is that it is the feeling "I work" that is the hindrance. If you are destined to work you will not be able to avoid it — somehow you will be forced to work. It is really not your choice whether to work or not, because the individual as such does not have any independence or autonomy to have any volition.

What constitutes bondage or hindrance to enlightenment is not the effort as such, but the sense of doership. This is the point behind the apparent contradiction that the Masters seem to teach predestination in theory but free will in practice. This will also explain the affirmation by Christ that not even a sparrow can fall without the will of God, and that the very hairs on one's head are numbered.

The Quran affirms that all power all knowledge, all Grace are with God, and that He leads aright whom He will and leads astray whom He will.
186 And yet both Christ and the Quaran 82 exhort men to right effort. Perhaps this puzzle would resolve itself when it is seen in the perspective of the totality of functioning, proceeding to unfold the play of the Grand Design. Every event — including the happening of what is known as "enlightenment" through a particular human apparatus — must fit in with the script of this drama that Life is.

In the course of spiritual evolution (which may involve many "lives" but not the same individual jiva) the process culminating in the phenomenon of enlightenment could be notionally broken up or analyzed into seven stages. First, there is the thought that material pleasure is much too transitory and unstable, and that a more stable and lasting kind of happiness should be sought. This gives rise to the process of self-enquiry which may include a search for and guidance from one or more "Gurus". At this stage, there arises a keen sense of dispassion and non-attachment because of which the mind becomes more sensitive, more subtle and more transparent. After these three stages, there arises a deeper dispassion, a natural turning away from sense-objects and a firmer attachment towards one's real nature, whatever it might be. This attachment towards Truth takes a firmer hold of the psyche and makes it rooted, in the fifth stage, in one's true self. The sixth stage arises when the mind, deeply rooted in the self, ceases conceptualizing and objectivizing, and the world appearance is seen as merely the reflection of one's own true self. The ultimate seventh stage means continuously living in the present moment, in noumenal state without any sense of doership like a dry leaf in the breeze. This is the transcendental stage, where everything is spontaneous, natural, unbroken.

Just as an actor ~~is~~ portrays different roles of widely differing personalities, so also the mind creates different states of consciousness, like waking and dreaming. It is the mind which experiences what it objectivizes. Indeed, mind is nothing other than the conceptualizing, the thinking. When the mind remains firmly attached to "what-is", thought ceases, objectivization ceases, and only Reality remains. It is not by any self-effort that this happens but only when there is perfect understanding and deep conviction: "understanding is all". Understanding and conviction result in apperception of "what-is", and then, consciousness, which had erroneously identified itself with the inert body, realizes its universality and the identification is annihilated. This does not involve any study of the scriptures, any self-disciplinary practices or meditative drills. All that is needed is the spontaneous, instantaneous apperception in depth of "what-is", that ~~to~~ the totality of the phenomenal manifestation ~~which~~ is but the objective expression of the subjective noumenon. The individual entity is inexistent, irrelevant, and both bondage and liberation are mere concepts which disappear in thin air when apperception happens, and mind becomes healed into ~~dead or vacant~~ its wholeness and holiness.

Ignorance or mental conditioning throws up a ceaseless flow of phenomenal objects through the process of objectivizing, but only until there has arisen a natural yearning for self-knowledge through dispassion. A shadow remains in front only so long as you turn your back to the sun; ignorance disappears when you turn towards the light of self-knowledge. The firm conviction "I am not the Brahman but an individual entity" drives the personal consciousness into bondage. The firm conviction "Everything is the absolute Brahman and the individual entity is nothing but an illusion" liberates the personal consciousness into its natural universality.

The division into interrelated opposites of subject/object, me/not-me, negative/positive, etc. is merely the illusion created by thought in the split-mind. Bondage is therefore merely the bondage of the illusion of separation, and when this illusion is exposed by the powerful light of self-knowledge, the illusion of bondage disappears, and what remains is what has always been — the absolute "what-is" here and now, without the slightest taint of the space-time concept of duration which is the basis of all conceptualization.

Ignorance or mental conditioning is like a veil over self-knowledge, and thereby creates the delusion of pleasure and pain. When all that exists is unicity — the what-is — where is the question of any "one" doing anything? While doing any and all actions that are natural to the psychosomatic apparatus, and there is no attachment to what is being done, the action is truly non-action. On the other hand, while not doing anything, it is action if there is attachment to the non-doing. If there is realization that the entire universe is like a shadow, without substance of its own, like the illusion created by a magician, how can there remain any sense of doership?

The seed of the phenomenal appearance of the universe is only a thought that has arisen in consciousness — I AM. Such thought is nothing but a concept, a mental conditioning or ignorance that really has only a momentary existence, but it seems like a continuous flow like that of a river because ignorance strings these moments horizontally like a string of beads. This ignorance veils reality, and makes unreal things appear real and reality unreal. When you attempt to grasp it, you cannot do so because such ignorance is itself an illusion. But, like a flimsy fibre that acquires strength when knitted into a rope, the illusion of ignorance, when repeated innumerable times in memory, acquires the strength of reality.

What a horrendous thing this ignorance is! But it is really only like the second moon in diplopia and creates utter confusion in the mind just as one thinks the shore is moving away when sitting in a moving

boat, or one thinks the train is moving when actually the train is still and it is the other
189. train that is moving away. It creates the living dream and perverts all experiences and relationships in dualism. And yet, the moment there is realization ~~that~~ of the ~~apparent~~ real nature of the phenomenal manifestation — that it is really like the child of a barren woman — then ~~the~~ ignorance is exposed and annihilated. When the flow of water ceases, the river dries up. When dualism of ignorance ceases and conceptualization stops, there is phenomenal absence and noumenal presence.

Enquiry into ignorance ~~like the~~ with questions ~~reasons~~ such as why ignorance should have arisen at all and similar points of curiosity are best ignored because, as Nisargadatta Maharaj used to say, it is like the unnecessary scratching ~~it~~ around a particular spot on the body which <u>thereby</u> raises an itch. Once it is clearly understood that ignorance has no existence, that it is merely an illusion that has arisen as a movement in consciousness, any further enquiries would be like projecting the future and examining the past of the child of a barren woman!

Ignorance vanishes as soon as it is ~~such for~~ examined critically. It is because of ignorance that one mistakes the silver in the mother-of-pearl, and this ignorance can last only until the mother-of-pearl is seen for what it is. Ignorance vanishes as soon as it is apperceived that all that exists is the universal, infinite consciousness and that all phenomenal ~~appearances~~ manifestations are merely appearances in consciousness like a mirror-effect, and therefore illusory. All that exists is the consciousness which could be represented by the personal subjective pronoun "I".

Ignorance not being a real entity, no relationship could possibly exist between ignorance and the self — there can be relationship only between similar entities.

The hill is not really concerned with the cloud around it; so also ~~though~~ "I" — as the universal
190/ infinite consciousness — am 190/ totally independent of any sorrow or happiness, although it might appear that I am associated with it. I am independent of the senses. The senses naturally come into contact with their respective objects without being obliged to do so by any previous conditioning. It is only ~~out of~~ ignorance or delusion to think "I see this" or "I experience that". If this position is clearly apprehended, then actions would be performed naturally and spontaneously without being tainted by past mnemonic impressions. It is such action that is in truth non-action and not the inaction which is misconceived as non-action.

In truth, consciousness cannot really be conditioned because it is infinite and more subtle than the subtlest atom. It is from the mind, resting in the ego-notion and the reflected consciousness in the senses, that the illusion of the self-limitation of consciousness arises. This illusion of self-limitation and the ego acquires a false validity by the weight of sheer repetition at an incredible speed. The infinite universal consciousness that we ARE is totally untainted by any of these illusions. The hill is quite independent of the clouds around it.

The Understanding that is Pure Joy

When a visitor once remarked that in the presence of a well-known saint he felt a tremendous sense of peace and joy, Nisargadatta Maharaj asked him if that feeling was not similar to the feeling one had when relaxing in pleasant surroundings with a cool drink, after a long stint of physical exertion. The visitor was startled by the query but recovered well enough to suggest that the feeling he had was much beyond a physical satisfaction. When Maharaj further asked him if the feeling was something similar to what one felt when listening to a soulful <u>bhajan</u> (spiritual song of a <u>bhakta</u>) sung very feelingly, the visitor did not know what to say. What Maharaj was pointing out [191] was that whether the joy was physical like the ecstasy after a completely satisfying sex act, or something psychic like listening to great music, it cannot but be transitory and on the surface like the waves on the sea.

What the ultimate understanding brings about is pure joy deep in the heart of one's being. Such joy is pure joy, and treats alike all experiences of pleasure and misery that might appear momentarily on the surface. Such pure joy, which IS the ultimate understanding, is denoted by the traditional term Sat-chit-ananda (existence - consciousness - bliss), the very essence of the source of all manifestation.

When the ultimate understanding, the apperception, takes place, this pure joy overflows itself in various ways. In Ashtavakra Geeta (in Chapter 2), the King Janaka expresses this joy in an uninhibited manner which would be totally misunderstood if it is taken as the outpouring of a personal individual. It is indeed the outpouring of the joy by consciousness after it is released from the limitation of personal identity. It must be remembered, however, that whatever happens

in the totality is not subject to any rules and regulations. Something that is expected to happen may or may not happen. A particle may or may not behave like a particle, it may behave like a wave.

When understanding takes place, there may not be an irrepressible cascading of joy. Thus, when enlightenment took place, the Buddha, it is said, sat for seven days in total silence. He thought: those who are destined to understand will understand even if I do not utter a word; those who are destined not to understand will not understand even if I talk incessantly. Those who are destined to understand will understand through some word or some event howsoever insignificant. Those who are about to awaken will awaken even through the softest sound or even the gentlest breeze, while others may not awaken even if they are roughly shaken. It is said that the great Chinese sage Lao-tzu received sudden enlightenment when he was sitting under a tree
192 and saw a dry leaf fall from a branch of the tree. The dry leaf became his Guru.

The briefest teaching by Ashtavakra was enough to send his disciple Janaka into the subjective experience of the Self, which is the basis of Janaka's spontaneous outpouring into the expression of the joy of this experience.

Says Janaka:

I am the taintless, serene, pure consciousness, transcending Nature. How long have I been fooled, deluded, bewildered by the illusion (of Maya).

It is I alone who illumine this body and also reveal this manifested universe. (It is only because of the light of the consciousness that all perceptions of the senses and all modifications of the mind become our experiences). Therefore, mine

is all this universe — or, verily, nothing is mine. (All is mine because I am immanent in everything; nothing, because I transcend, at the same time, all that is manifested).

O! Having renounced the universe together with this body, I now experience the Supreme Self, through some sudden wondrous wisdom that has spontaneously been awakened.

As waves, foam and bubbles are not different from the water on which they ~~are~~ are formed, so the universe which has sprung up spontaneously from the Self, is not different from it. Just as cloth, when analyzed, is found to be thread and nothing else, so this manifested universe is seen, on enquiry, to be nothing but the unmanifested Self.

Just as sugar made from sugar-juice is permeated through and through by that juice, so the universe that has emanated from me, is permeated within and without by the "I" that is the Self.

The manifestation of the universe that has appeared because of the ignorance of the Self, disappears (within the Self) when there is the understanding of the
3/ Self — just as the snake appears because of the non-apprehension of the rope and disappears when there is apprehension of it.

Light is my very essence, I am nothing other than light. It is I alone who shine when the universe manifests itself.

O, the wonder of it! The universe appears in me, conceived in ignorance like the silver in the mother-of-pearl, snake in the rope, water in the sunbeam (mirage).

Just as the pot merges into clay, the wave into water, the ornament into gold, so also the universe that has emanated from me will ultimately merge into me.

O, the wonder ~~I~~ that I AM! — who knows

no decay and who survives the destruction of the entire universe from Brahma, the creator down to the lowly blade of grass. O, the wonder that I AM — who, though with a body, am One who neither go anywhere nor come from anywhere, but ever abide pervading the universe. O, the wonder that I AM — the one with incomparable competence to hold and bear the entire universe for all time without even touching it with my body. O, the wonder that I AM — who have (at the same time) nothing or all that is conceivable in thought and speech.

The triad of the knowledge, that which is to be known, and the knower does not in fact exist, although it appears through ignorance in the taintless consciousness that I AM.

O, the root of all misery is the sense of duality. There is no remedy for it other than the understanding that all objects of experience are illusory and that what I AM is the one, non-dual, pure consciousness that is bliss.

What I AM is pure consciousness. It is through ignorance that I had imposed limitations upon myself (body, mind, ego etc). With unceasing awareness of this fact, I do abide in the Absolute Self, purged of all mental modi-
194 fications. (The deep understanding of one's true nature precludes the operation of the outer world — the senses sporting with their objects — from penetrating the sanctum of one's psyche and creating any mental disturbances).

Neither with bondage nor with liberation am I concerned. The illusion has lost its support (ignorance), and it has ceased to function. O, the universe, though emanated from me (as an illusion) does not in reality exist. A conviction has arisen that the body and the universe (the body is an infinitesimal part of the whole manifested universe) are illusory,

and that what I AM is pure consciousness. So, now that ignorance has been demolished, how can any conceptualizing take place?

The body-mind apparatus, heaven and hell, bondage and liberation, anxiety and fear are all concepts. What have I — who am pure consciousness — to do with any of these concepts? O, the wonder of it! I feel no duality, and the multitude of human beings has become like a wilderness. Towards what then should I feel any attachment?

I am not this body. Nor do I have a body. I AM pure consciousness, not a jiva, a personal entity. This indeed was my bondage, that I desired to live (as a separate, independent entity).

O, the wonder of it! In me, the limitless ocean (of pure consciousness), the winds of conceptualization produce diverse world-waves instantly. With the calming of these winds, the ship of the conceived universe, unfortunately for the trader-jiva, gets wrecked and sinks in the limitless ocean that I AM. (When the mind is at rest without any conceptualizing, the ego, his ship together with all his collected concepts sink into the pure consciousness that every human being really is). O, the wonder of it! In the shoreless ocean of consciousness that I AM, the waves of individual selves arise according to their inherent nature, come into contact with one another, play their respective roles (in the Lila that this life is) for a while and then disappear.

The Essence of the Ultimate Understanding.

The essence of the ultimate understanding is the ineluctable fact that individual human being, as such, does not – can not – have any volition, any independence of choice of decision and action, for the simple reason that the human being is not an autonomous entity. The human being is merely an infinitesimal part of the totality of manifestation. That the human being can see, hear etc. through his senses is merely because he has, like any other sentient being like an insect or an animal, been endowed with sentience; that he can think is merely because he has, in addition, been endowed with intellect. In the absence of consciousness, there is no sentience, no intellect, and as far as the human being is concerned, no manifest world.

An immediate corollary of this basic understanding is the equally undeniable fact that the desire for "liberation" from the "bondage" of this life is itself a spontaneous arousal which varies from individual to individual. One person may be intensely interested in the discovery of his true Self, while another may be only superficially interested and concerned only at odd intervals of time; and there will be the third type who is just not interested in the subject, who is only concerned with his material gains and sensual delights. The ultimate understanding comports the conviction that no credit or blame attaches to any of these three types because none of them had any choice in the matter. Each of the types occupies a certain position in the spiritual evolution in the totality of functioning. This position is inherent, ~~...~~ ingrained and impressed at the time of conception when the father's sperm fructified in the mother's womb.

It must be clearly understood that no amount of the illusory volition or determination or

pourasha can bring about any substantial change 196 unless, of course, that too was part of the grand design of the totality of functioning. Unless this is 199 clearly understood, the sense of doership can only strengthen the ego and make the arrival of enlightenment that much more difficult. Even this understanding is again a part of the total functioning!

This question of individual volition and personal effort is extremely subtle and difficult to understand. And yet it is absolutely necessary not only to understand it intellectually but to absorb it in our very being. The difficulty arises because most Masters seem to have taught predestination in theory but free will in practice! Jesus Christ affirmed that without the will of God not even a sparrow can fall, and that the very hairs on one's head are numbered. And the Quran very definitely affirms that all knowledge and power are with God and that He leads aright whom He will and leads astray whom He will. And yet both Christ and the Quran exhort men to right effort and condemn sin. The _apparent_ contradiction will easily be solved if one keeps in mind the concept of spiritual evolution mentioned above. The absolute illusoriness of the individual human being — and his so-called effort or _pourasha_ — will be quickly understood by the one who is on the very brim of enlightenment, whereas someone who is much lower in the scale will more easily accept the concept of effort, determination and concentration. The one whose _beeja_ (seed) is basically action-oriented will tend towards the Karma yoga because he is what is known as the "somatotonic" type, whereas the "cerebrotonic" will at once grasp with delight the principle of non-effort and non-duality without the least danger of misunderstanding. It is undoubtedly because of this inherent and basic

197

* This enjoinment of the Masters takes place of course as part of the total functioning. 197

3

difference between the different types of human beings — at different locations in the conceptual evolutionary scale — that the Masters have specifically enjoined that the esoteric teaching of non-duality should not be preached "in a public place", because then there would be the distinct possibility of the teaching not only being not understood, but being misunderstood.* The type of human being who relies on his personal effort at one stage will, at a later stage, come to realize that such effort as is made is truly the effort in the totality of functioning and not that of any illusory individual doer.

The whole point is that so long as a person considers the effort as his personal effort with the purpose of achieving something, he is rejecting the all-mightiness of the Almighty. So long as a person wants something from the Almighty, he is rejecting the fact that "Thy will be done". True love of God means surrender to Him, wanting nothing, not even salvation.

The fact of the matter is that the central point of the ultimate understanding is that at any moment — in any Kshana — there is perfection in the totality of the functioning. Whatever imperfection is seen, is seen by the imperfect mind in duration and duality. If this is clearly apperceived, no problem can arise, no apparent discrepancy or contradiction can arise. In the absence of such apperception, what prevails is the imperfect, divided mind which cannot help raising the problems. The Masters, in their great compassion, do provide answers, relevant also in duality and duration, while repeatedly asserting the imperfection of the divided mind. In these circumstances, it cannot help the seeker if he chooses to depend only on such answers that the Masters have given and to ignore the background against which these answers were given. It must be specifically stated that it is the seeker who will lose and not the

Masters. The Masters in their wisdom are fully aware that the understanding of some few and the misunderstanding of the many is all in the course of the <u>Lila</u> that the totality of functioning is.

The questions concerning predetermination, personal volition or choice of decision, the autonomy and independence of the human being as a separate entity, and the question of time (past and future) are so intricately involved with one another, that the very essence of the ultimate understanding is nothing other than a clear understanding, at the deepest level of one's being, of this very apparent intricacy — "apparent" because ~~it~~ the problem exists only in the mind, the imperfect and divided mind.

What man wants is security for the future. He cannot really be happy even if the present moment provides him with everything that his heart desires. He must have a future he can look forward to, and his experience of the past tells him that "security" has never ~~been~~ had anything resembling permanency. It is clear to him that even if he does achieve his goal at some time in future, the "future" does not stop with the achievement of that particular goal, and that what he is chasing is actually nothing better than a will-o'-the-wisp. The real tragedy of this situation is that he cannot enjoy even that which is available to him in a large measure at ~~that~~ any present moment. But when there is true understanding, there is acceptance of the present moment — and whatever it offers — which permits a total, uninhibited enjoyment of it. It is this fact which describes the Jnani (one who is established in Truth) as <u>mahabhokta</u>, the supreme enjoyer.

All the items which make for "insecurity" have existed since time immemorial — poverty, disease, death, war — and all along there have been a comparatively few persons of understanding

who have accepted the insecurity as an intrinsic part of what we call life, by using the understanding to take a qualitative jump from the relativity of living to the non-relativity of witnessing whatever happens as part of that living. Actually they have not used the understanding as much as that they have unconsciously become that understanding, that apperception, that subjectivity as their real nature. They have accepted "what is" at any moment as the objective expression of their subjective being, so that there is no question at all of any desire to change through the
129 supposed volition of the supposed individual the "what is" into something else. The basis of this understanding of their true nature is, of course, the utter conviction that the manifested universe (including the human being), is an illusion in consciousness, the appearance of which needs the concept of "space" in which the tri-dimensional objects could be presented and "time" in which they could be observed. With this conviction, the human being with his intellect and volition and paurusha (and all the other concepts) is seen for the joke and the puppet that he is, and it needs no effort to accept that "Thy will be done" because Thee — which is truly "I", the subjective noumenon — is all there is, immanent in and transcendental to all manifestation.

To put it simply, the essence of understanding is the acceptance — not the reluctant acceptance of frustration but the acceptance of utter conviction — of the fact that life, or living, is not a stagnant pool of water but a flowing river, that it would be unhealthy to keep stagnant water for any length of time, and that you cannot keep running water in a bucket. If you would have running water, you must let it flow. The flow is the very nature of the river, and change is the very nature of life, — and it must be accepted. Peace of mind, which is what most of humanity wants, consists not in grasping life in order to keep it secure for us, but in "letting go". It is

rather ironic that the ultimate understanding comes not by holding on to the concept of God but ~~in~~ by ~~a~~ relieving ourselves and letting go of all concepts concerning God. The ultimate understanding can come neither ~~not~~ by straining to hang on to the material pleasures of the world nor by making efforts to seek the infinite ~~and the~~ absolute, but by accepting the ~~finite~~ finite and ~~the~~ relative world of living with all its limitations and its interrelated opposites, as the objective expression of our own subjective Self. The universe is the objective body of the subjective absolute. // The true understanding comports the conviction that it is impossible in life to have the pleasure that is wanted without the pain that is not wanted. Indeed it is most doubtful if it would be an acceptable state to have continuous pleasure: a continuous diet of rich food would both destroy the sensitivity and appetite for food itself and make one utterly sick! But the ~~stuff~~ crux of the problem of experiencing alternating pleasure and pain is not really in the actual experiencing but in ~~the~~ aligning it with a misconceived idea of "time". While the animal is happy enough with the momentary pleasure, man needs enjoyable memories and happy expectations in order to enjoy the immediate pleasure. Indeed, the memories and expectations are far more real and intense than the present pleasure or pain, because the habit of looking ahead or behind reduces the present pleasure and increases the present pain. Therefore, what it means in fact is that this habit ~~creates~~ gives a a presence to the dead past and the uncertain future, and an absence to the here and now. The only way to break this habit is to be truly convinced that change — almost continuous and ceaseless change — is the very warp and woof of the manifestation and its functioning, that we call "life", and, perhaps more importantly, that the *changefulness and transitoriness of the manifested world is the very essence of its seductive

loveliness and vivacity. As has been well put, "when we fail to see that our life IS change, we set ourselves against ourselves and become like Ouroboros, the misguided snake, who tries to eat its own tail." The important point concerning the acceptance of change as the basis of life is that such acceptance should not be a matter of compulsion or frustration but the natural result of the clear understanding that the only way to deal with change is to dive into it and become the movement.

Life presents a problem only because the individual thinks of himself as a fixed, separate entity and tries to make sense out of life from the point of view of this separate entity. What is more, organized religion has supported him in this misconceived notion of the separation of the individual from the rest of the universe. And an exhortation to treat the neighbour as oneself has served only to emphasize this separation, along with the setting up of a goal in life for the individual, an immortal life in due course when united with (the concept of) the changeless nature of the conceived deity or God. In other words, the individual has been brainwashed into making an effort to fit the flow of living into a framework of rigid norms, if he wishes to make any sense out of life.

The result has been a total misunderstanding, because the fixed and isolated thought-words are quite incapable of describing the movement and fluidity of life, the nature of the actual experience. Therefore, instead of realizing the nature of man to be that actual experience of beingness — the sense of being alive, of being present (I Am) — man has been conditioned to regard himself as a body, a physical volume "bounded by a skin in space, and by birth and death in time." The fact of the matter is that man is an intrinsic, though infinitesimally small, part of the manifested universe, a pattern in a

movement of convoluted evolution which began millions of years ~~ago~~ before the isolated event called "birth" and will continue long, long after the singled out event ~~of~~ called "death". Therefore, to separate an "individual" from the rest of the universe can be nothing more than a conceptual separation; and to expect perpetuity or immortality for an individual is only to want ~~intemporality for~~ a concept or a convention to endure eternally. Surely, therefore, the ultimate understanding must comport the firmest possible conviction that man cannot be an entity independent of and separate from the totality of manifestation, and that, therefore, the "knowledge" of the ultimate can only be the purest awareness, as such, without any separation, of the objective expression of the absolute subject that we call life — the ~~eternal~~ what-is here and now. ~~It is not~~ The "vision of God" cannot, therefore, be a concept of a merciful father figure, or even a flash of blinding light, because anything like that could only be an image or concept in consciousness — which is the same as saying that you cannot give a name to It, because naming it or defining it would be to limit the limitless.

Awareness of what-is-here-and-now, free from concepts and judgments, is not intellectual knowledge. It is the reality that is sought, but such reality cannot be an object. Any attempt to describe this awareness must fail because the awareness that is reality comes about ~~by~~ not by adding words and descriptions but removing such things which prevents its experience, much like a sculpture ~~is~~ which presents itself when certain parts of the material are chipped off, not when something is added to the original slab. The wanting for perfect security is one such thing that needs hacking away before awareness can present

itself. It is not merely a conflict between the desire for security in conditions which by their very nature cannot be fixed. More importantly, it is a matter of separating oneself from the rest of the world, which is the basis of ~~security~~ the desire for security. In order to find security you want to separate yourself from the rest of the world. You want the rest of the world — the others — to leave you alone; and yet you find that it is this isolation itself that makes you feel insecure. The ultimate understanding must include a clear appreciation of the fact that the craving for security is like the craving to hold one's breath in time of ~~da~~ suspected danger, ~~and~~ that the more one pursues it, the more painful it becomes, and that therefore there just cannot exist any safety or security. And this understanding is not at the usual level of being told to "face it". Facing it means challenging it, fighting it, and thus you are still very much involved in it. The perfect understanding of this (or any other fact) lies in being that fact, without any separation between a "me" and the fact of the matter.

It is ~~only when~~ the belief that there is something within us which endures through all the changes in life, which is at the root of all desire for security. The desire for security will vanish only when this belief in a "me" gives way to the faith that there is ~~I which is~~ indeed the changeless within us — I Am — the consciousness which is our true nature. This faith is indeed the essence of the ultimate understanding, the awareness of our true nature ~~of~~ That which is, here and now. This faith symbolizes the understanding that there cannot be any permanence or security in life, and that there cannot be any "me" or "mine" to be protected. ~~This~~ In this awareness, there is no entity that is aware. The awareness is pure awareness, without any "one" to be aware of the awareness.

It is of the essence of ultimate

understanding to be aware of the present moment, delinked from the past and the future, to discover that at each moment there is nothing other than the experience without the experiencer. Such awareness means being alert and vitally sensitive to all actions, reactions and relations in the present moment. Such intent awareness is easy enough in times of pleasure or happiness when one can forget oneself, but the separation from the experience comes about quickly in times of physical or emotional pain. And yet, it is in such times of pain that it is most essential to prevent such separation, because the astonishing ability of the human organism to adapt itself to both physical and psychological pain cannot come into full operation if the pain is constantly stimulated and strengthened by the tension created by the effort to escape from it.

Pain is identified as pain only because there is a memory of pleasure. Pain gets intensified by the memory of earlier pleasure. In actual fact the brain can record at any one moment only one experience. Instead of being fully and alertly aware of a present unpleasant experience, one tries to tackle it in terms of the dead past, such as fear or loneliness or boredom. In an attempt to avoid the experience one tries to adapt oneself to the unknown present by resorting to the dead past, by comparing it with the memory of the past. This might perhaps have worked in cases where you could get away: an aspirin would relieve the headache. But what about things you cannot escape? The answer is to <u>be aware of fear</u>. To be intensely aware of the fear is to realize that you <u>are</u> the fear, and therefore escape is impossible. Indeed, if naming, defining, and comparing is avoided, every experience becomes a new experience; and there is no conflict between the experiencer and the experience because there

is no resistance.

It has been the actual experience of most people that when resistance and tension ceased, the pain itself became a manageable ache and was no longer the frightening experience that was imagined: the pain had sometimes disappeared altogether. The significant point is that in the absence of a resistance to (and separation from) the pain, it is no longer a problem, because then the desire to escape merges into the pain. This is easier to understand when one remembers that a fall from a height will cause much less damage when the body is relaxed, a building generally has a "give" in its construction in order better to withstand a storm or an earthquake in regions where they are susceptible to them. The mind has the inherent ability of "give" so that it can absorb shocks but it is necessary not to burden it unnecessarily with the resistance and tension of opposition (which in effect means running away from the experience). And the resistance in any form or manner ("fighting it" or running away or giving in in frustration) must continue until it is realized that the thinker and the thought, the experiencer and the experience are not separate. Realization of the inevitability of pain brings into operation the natural "give" of the mind, thus enabling it to absorb the pain and reduce its intensity: the experience becomes the consciousness of pain without the illusory experiencer who was afraid of the experience.

The key to the bearing of pain is its unequivocal acceptance as the fresh experience of the moment, through total relaxation. When this is clearly understood, the question how to do it should not arise. How to relax? How to accept whatever experience the present moment brings with total receptivity? How to breathe? How to digest the food? To expect answers to such questions is to miss the point altogether. Indeed, that such questions should [205] arise is the clear proof that

man has allowed his "brain" to develope logic and reason ~~of~~ linear thinking — without maintaining a balance with its inherent intuitive wisdom. The result is dissatisfaction, conflict, separation within separation, and a ceaseless vicious circle.

The essence of the ultimate understanding is contained in an extraordinary transformation in the vision of life in which the usual separation between "me" and the "other" is healed so completely that the organic unity of the world ~~that it~~ is not a mere intellectual inference but a deep and lasting ~~feeling~~ experience, not just a belief but a confirmed faith. It is, however, important to realize that this sense of unity is not necessarily demonstrable in practice. ~~It is to be realized that~~ While there may not be a desire to embrace the beasts and reptiles, what is certainly ~~there~~ is a firm conviction that our feelings about the creepy and the slimy creatures are feelings not outside ourselves but the hidden aspects of our own bodies and brains". What ~~It~~ is realized is that the sense of unity may not be "a sort of trance, in which all form and distinction is abolished, as if man and the universe merged into a luminous mist of pale mauve", but that the wide variety and multiplicity seen in the universe are not warring opposites but complementaries like the various organs ~~organs~~ and parts of the body, and that the conditioning of separation, ~~is~~ caused by thought-words, is seen for what it really is, so that what was an inexplicable puzzle to logic and reason becomes a ridiculously obvious matter of what-is.

The essence of the ultimate understanding is to see the what-is, as the manifested expression of the ~~un~~ unmanifest reality, with the whole mind of the present moment here-and-now, without any effort to make life mean something for the individual in terms of the future.

← The State of Enlightenment

Every atom of existence contains countless ~~world appearances~~ universes, all ~~being~~ appearances in ~~the~~ consciousness, infinite and universal, which pervades the entire being of the atom. So each jiva experiences within itself whatever has arisen within itself because of the pervading energy. All phenomenal manifestation is nothing but a long dream and everything in the dream appears very real so long as the dream continues.

As soon as there is realization that all phenomenal manifestation is merely an appearance in consciousness, and is, therefore, illusory except as the infinite consciousness itself which is the real and permanent substance, then all notions of diversity and separation at once disappear because such realization comports the realization that "time", "space", "matter", "motion" or "action", are all but different aspects of the same infinite consciousness. Such realization is similar to the realization that the many different kinds of preparations spread out on the table during a feast are different only in regard to the taste, shape and size but that they are all created out of the same basic ingredients.

Illusion disappears when one experiences the truth that it is on account of ~~the~~ consciousness that the manifestation appears in the individual jiva, and that there are jiva within jiva, ad infinitum. And when illusion disappears, the craving for sensorial pleasures gradually falls off because of the realization that the painting of a woman's form, however beautiful and life-like, is not the woman and, similarly, sensorial pleasures, however acceptable they may seem, ~~are~~ do not make for lasting peace and happiness.

When consciousness became aware of its existence as the pure potential plenum, when the first thought I AM arose in consciousness, the nature of the occurrence was not unlike awakening from deep sleep and becoming aware of the manifestation without; but the manifestation without is actually a mirror reflection of the consciousness within. When thus there was awareness in consciousness with the thought I AM, the pure elements (*tanmatra*) arose simultaneously and spontaneously, and also, all the senses (which actually are pure void of plenum) came into being. The corresponding knowledge and experience of the five elements and the five senses brought about the identification of the universal consciousness as the ego-sense. Enlightenment brings about the disidentification from the experiences of the senses, and thereby the freedom from the psychological and illusory distress of the mind.

Enlightenment brings about a transformation of perception and attitude — a *metanoesis* — whereby for the rest of the lifespan, the "individual person", having lost his individuality becomes the *mahākartā*, the *mahābhoktā*, the *mahātyāgi*.

As a *mahākartā* (the supreme doer of actions), being totally free of any doubt which is inevitably based on the ego-concept, appropriate actions get performed through him in any circumstances (whether they may be considered as right or wrong according to the current social standards). The point is that such actions would not be tainted by any of the multitude of mental notions and prejudices, because "he" would be merely witnessing the actions with complete indifference to the results that might follow, since he was not the doer.

As a *mahābhoktā* (the supreme enjoyer),

he actively enjoys all natural and spontaneous experiences which come about without any desire or effort. Even when engaged in actions, he does not grasp or cling to what would generally be considered as "acceptable", nor does he abhor or avoid and reject anything that would generally be considered "unacceptable".

As a *mahātyāgi* (the supreme renouncer), he has renounced his separate indi-
208 viduality as the "me" opposed to the "others" and thereby has at once renounced all the inter-related opposites including birth and death, good and evil, etc. He is thus the pure witnessing of the dream-play that this life is.

After enlightenment there is the clear apprehension that just as long as there is the potent oilseed, the oil in it must exist, so also, as long as the psychosomatic apparatus known as the body exists, so long must that apparatus act in accordance with the way it is programmed to react physically and psychically to an outside stimulus. As long as the body exists, so long must the physical organs respond to any stimulus and so long will also naturally exist the different moods. Any resisting or rebelling against such states or reactions would be "like attacking space or empty air with a sword". The equilibrium of yoga is for the mind, and not for organs of action and their states. Self-realization or enlightenment comports the apprehension that the mind is not an entity but a mere notion. All notions and concepts thereafter become irrelevant and therefore no desires arise for wanting anything that is generally considered acceptable, nor is there any question of rejecting what is generally considered as unacceptable. Whatever comes unsought is welcomed and experienced. As long as the body lasts, the organs of action are free to perform their normal function though, of course, the mind-intellect and the senses remain in a state of equanimity and detachment.

It is for this reason that the sage Vasishtha advised Rama "to engage himself in natural activity which arises spontaneously and unsought, without any personal sense of grief or guilt: "Enjoy the pleasures of the world and find liberation too."

Even where there has been liberation or enlightenment or whatever, comprehension of materiality does not change while the body is engaged in day-to-day activity. It must never

209 be forgotten that moksha or enlightenment is also a state of the mind. The natural function of the body continues as heretofore. The body may respond to pain or satisfaction like any other body and may weep or laugh, but, deep down, there is neither elation nor depression, but perfect equilibrium

From Brahma down to a blade of grass all phenomenal objects are subject to two forms of birth — the first as a part of the totality of manifestation, the second through the personal identification of the infinite consciousness. When this ignorance of personal identification gets removed by apperception, the second birth is at once negated.

Enlightenment or awakening is not a state of existence like a rock or a vegetable. That is a state which arises consequent on the deepest possible conviction of the unicity of what-is and of the non-difference between what-is and what-appears. It arises after a thorough self-enquiry at the end of which all mental conditioning of dualism disappears altogether; it is a state of total freedom or Kaivalya when all that appears and all that happens is accepted as an integral part of "what-is" and there is not the slightest desire to change anything or become anything else.

Where the seed of vasana or self-limitation ("me" as separate from "not me") or mental conditioning in any form remains, that state is comparable to the temporary condition of deep sleep, and not the perfect state. Perfection comes about only when there is the deepest possible conviction of the unreality of anything that is phenomenally perceptible, so that finally even the seed of vasana is destroyed. This is the transcendental state of perfection, the state of pure being when the existence of the body is totally irrelevant.

The state of perfection means the realization that the chit-shakti, the energy that determines the nature and characteristics of the molecules of each object, is none other than the ātma-shakti, the energy of the universal consciousness which lies dormant when consciousness is in a state of rest and erupts with the first thought I AM.

Conversely, just as the very first thought disturbs sleep and ends it, similarly the first awakening of inner intelligence — the very first stirring of the self-enquiry — what is this "I" within this destructible body? — gives ignorance its death-blow. When the light of enquiry is turned on ignorance, ignorance vanishes. Can

darkness remain when light is turned on it? The light of self-enquiry dispels the darkness of ignorance or avidya which is only the belief that ~~ff~~ something other than Brahman can exist as reality.

When the false perception has come to an end by the elimination of subject/object relationship, the mind is demolished and is totally ineffective like dry leaves after they are burnt. Where apperception of the Truth has taken place, and both the "what-is" and "what-appears" have been correctly understood in their mutual relationship of transcendence and immanence, the state of mind is known as satva, transparent or extremely subtle. Then, indeed, that state of mind could hardly be called "mind" — it would be rightly described only as satva. Such awakened "entities" may be engaged in their respective occupations and carry on their normal activities as if they are interested, but truly they are always in perfect equilibrium and take life playfully accepting events as they come along. Dualistic concepts cannot arise in such people because the very seed of ignorance has been burnt beyond recovery, and they are constantly aware of the truth that they are in fact the infinite and universal consciousness within which innumerable universes appear and disappear like waves and ripples on the ocean water.

All the apparent differences are nothing but the self-experiencing of the Infinite. Experiencing is not different from consciousness; the ego-sense is not different from experiencing; the jiva (the individual) is not different from the ego-sense; and the mind is not different but inseparable from the jiva. Are the waves separable from the ocean? The awakened being, though he appears as if he is living like any other person, really does nothing because he seeks nothing.

The pot may be pulverized but is the space therein destroyed? The body may be dead and buried or cremated, but is consciousness within also thereby destroyed? When there is apperception, can the mind with its notions of happiness and unhappiness survive? There is neither the craving for pleasure nor the desire to get rid of it. With the wisdom of apperception comes true dispassion and there is genuine renunciation through the surrender of the conceptual "me-entity".

With the ~~an~~ annihilation of the "me-entity" comes peace and tranquility leaving no room for confusion or doubt or delusion. Concepts of heaven and hell, birth, death and rebirth, ~~at Ako ffff~~ all get annihilated along with the "me-entity". What is more, even the delusion of liberation disappears together with that of bondage because both are based on the "me" concept. And then, it seems a miracle not that the mind should be freed from the veil of ignorance but that the mind should have in the first place been at all clouded and tainted by thought, percepts and concepts, desires and cravings.

With the apperception comes the conviction — or with the conviction comes the apperception — that the distinction between the universal consciousness and the personal consciousness was only notional, like the distinction between the wave and the water in the wave, or between the word and that to which it refers.

A breeze flowing through certain flowers passes on their fragrance, so also the consciousness creates bodies appropriate to the notions which it entertains and identifies itself with, and through these bodies which it energizes, it experiences the consequences of those notions.

It is only when consciousness divests itself of the various notions and concepts by ceasing to conceptualize, when the mind is not swayed by the pairs of interrelated opposites and when objects are not seen as through by a pseudo-subject, that enlightenment happens. There is truly no transformation as such, only a demolishing of the conceptual bars of the bondage of limitation, which leaves consciousness in its unidentified, infinite universality. When the mind is cleansed of all conceptualization, it is restored to its natural wholeness, and it functions in its natural smooth flow without any confusion or doubt. Waves may appear and disappear on the surface of the ocean, worlds may arise and vanish on the surface of consciousness, but while the ignorant are swayed by the appearances, the jnanis are always aware of the calm equanimity of the sub-stratum underneath.

The moment enlightenment takes place, the person sees the truth that he is the infinite consciousness which contains within itself everything that happens everywhere at all times, that he is infinity and intemporality, and that pleasure and pain are experienced in the body through the operation of time because of the particular circumstances with which he (as the universal consciousness) is not directly concerned. The ignorant regard the body as the fountain source of suffering but to the enlightened, the body is the source of infinite delight and joy, but, being unattached to it, he is not sorry at the end of its span to part from the body which he had always regarded merely as an instrument.

2/3 There is no universe independent of the consciousness in which arise the phantasies of a moment or an epoch both of which are assumed to be ~~real~~ on a real time-scale, just as objects seen in a dream appear to be real at that time. A whole epoch can be conceptualized in the mind just as a whole city can be reflected even in a small mirror. How ~~can~~ then can we assert the reality of either duality or ~~non~~ non-duality? The fact is that ~~the~~ consciousness itself is both the moment and the epoch, the near and the far, which are the interrelated opposites which, on superimposition, cancel each other into a phenomenal void that is really the noumenal plenum of total potentiality.

~~As long as~~ The gold within is not perceived so long as what is seen is the bracelet. The gold is perceived only when the bracelet is seen as a mere shape that is easily changeable. When the ~~self~~ universe is seen as real, the self is not perceived. When the misconception of the ~~uni~~ universe as being real is discarded, what remains is consciousness. Total objective absence is total subjective presence.

When the self has been attained nothing has been attained! The inner and the outer, the self and the non-self are mere words without any significance or substance, used only for the benefit of the ignorant. When the external object is seen as such, the pseudo-subject is created. Actually all there is ~~is~~ is the see-ing, ~~no seer~~ neither the see-er nor the object seen. ~~The~~ When the mnemonic impressions have ceased the pseudo-subject no longer exists and without the supposed subject the object cannot exist either. The ~~self~~ noumenon as the subject exists because of the object, and the phenomenal object is but a reflection of the

Subject. Duality can exist only as the interrelated opposite of non-duality. Where is the question of union or unity if all there is is unicity? The goldness of the gold is always there; the question of duality arises only when there is a ~~form~~ name and form as a bracelet. That which is beyond all ~~th~~ interrelated opposites is the ~~the~~ Absolute, the Brahman. When there is apperception of this truth, all duality and non-duality disappear,

214 and what remains is not expressible / in words. Such apperception ~~it~~ happens only through self-enquiry. As long as words are used to denote a truth, duality in the form of the interrelated opposites is inevitable, but ~~they~~ words are necessary to ~~point~~ direct the attention of the ignorant to the truth. Words are not the truth.

Apperception of the Truth leads to the direct experience of non-duality: the ego-sense and the previous conditioning drop off, there is no compulsive feeling "me" and "mine" or the sense of acceptable and not-acceptable, and the body-mind apparatus functions "as if in deep sleep."

The desires that may arise in such a state of liberation would be in the course of the natural functions and devoid of any craving for any external objects. Such desires that existed even prior to any contact with sense objects would continue to exist — they are natural, spontaneous, not based on thought, and therefore free of the impurity of dualism. Truth is non-dual, but all action necessarily involves ~~???~~ duality because all functioning can only take place in apparent duality. Indeed, apperception comports the understanding that any difference between duality and non-duality is purely conceptual. Duality and non-duality are a pair of interrelated opposites like innumerable other such polarities based on the positive and the negative, without which manifestation could not take place. When ~~???~~ all concepts cease, when conceptualization itself ceases, ~~??? ???~~ what remains is the unicity of Absolute.

When apperception occurs, all events assume a sense of unreality because they are nothing but mere movements in consciousness. And consciousness is our true nature.

---

to be typed on a new page

The Final Truth

The final truth is that ultimate understanding in which there is no comprehender to comprehend the final truth.

If you were asked who you were, your answer would obviously be to give your full name and such bio-data as may be expected in the circumstances. Your answer to the question "Who are you?" would then be accurate and precisely what was expected. But it would not be the truth!

The truth is that you are not what you appear to be. Whatever your friends and foes may think of you (and whatever you yourself may think) from the viewpoint of your physical, mental and moral attributes, will all be images — images which would conceivably be liable to frequent changes. So then, what precisely are you?

Science takes a closer deeper look at you and tells you that deep down you are "nothing". The scientist discovers that the human being is actually a collection of limbs and organs that are themselves collections of minute living creatures named by science as cells, which in their turn are themselves collections of particles. This process carried to its extreme conclusion leads to the undeniable fact that in the end, there is no you at all, that you who appeared to others as an individual entity with a form and substance, and a certain mental image, just do not exist, that you are thus, as yourself, just nothing. In other words, whatever you may think you are, whatever others may think you are, actually you are "nothing", just perhaps a dance of invisible particles and waves. This is the magnified closest-range view of you which the scientist takes.

Science can also go to the other end and take a long-range view of you against the background

of your surroundings. That is to say, your existence in relation to the world. The scientist knows that as an individual body you are "nothing" but what are you as an appearance when the world is taken as a whole? In other words, you exist only when the world is considered as a whole of which you form a miniscule but essential part at any given moment. What will "you" appear to be when viewed from longer and longer distances? What happens then is that the "you" first give place to the room you stand in, then to the house, then to the city and so on until you are the world, until you are the universe from the viewpoint of infinitude.

The whole point is that "you" just do not exist as an individual entity. You are either "nothing" or "everything". Either way, it is a startling conclusion which is inescapable: I am not what I appear to be; I am not what I thought I was. The acceptance of this conclusion, even at the intellectual level to start with, will lead to a lasting faith if you take the time, as often as possible, to sit for a while quietly, let your body relax and let the mind cease its usual chatter, — and turn your mental gaze inward. If you do this, there may occur realization, — if there is Grace, if this fits in with the divine plan of the functioning of totality — realization that the nothingness that you are is not the emptiness of the void but the fullness of the plenum, realization that "your" body is but an instrument (with eyes, ears and brains) which the totality uses in its functioning.

Such a realization of one's phenomenal absence as a separate entity is tantamount to the realization of our subjective noumenal presence with the whole universe as our objective body. And such realization, say the Masters (the Sufist — the Vedantin — the Taoist), is Enlightenment: I exist as phenomenal absence, but the phenomenal appearance is my self.

Such realization translates itself in actual life as the actionless action of pure witnessing. Pure witnessing is of a dimension radically different from space-time, and is clearly to be distinguished from a mere movement in mind because (a) there is in witnessing no "witnesser" as an individual entity, (b) there is no judging of what is witnessed as being "good" or "bad", and therefore, (c) there is no desire to change "what-is" in any shape or form. In other words, such realization leads to an effortless gliding through life with a willing acceptance of whatever life might bring.

The final truth, therefore, is that the subjective "I" is all that exists: witnessing the phenomenal manifestation (including all the "me's") and its functioning; and not aware of Itself when there is no phenomenal manifestation to witness.

"I have worked hard and I could now consider myself a very successful man. I would be a hypocrite if I did not admit that I have a considerable amount of satisfaction — and, yes, a certain amount of pride — in what I have achieved. Would that be wrong?"

This is how one interview with Shri Maharaj started. The gentleman was in his mid-forties, a successful businessman in what could generally be considered as very happy circumstances.

The interview proceeded on the following lines:

Shri M. — Before we consider what is 'right' and what is 'wrong', please tell me who is asking this question.

Visitor (a bit ~~surprised~~ startled) — Why, 'me', of course.

Shri M. — and what is that?

Visitor — Me? This 'me' who is sitting before you.

Shri M. — and you think that that is you?

Visitor — You see me; I see myself — at least a part of me without a mirror, and the whole of me in a mirror.

Shri M. — You mean this object that is before me? What is your earliest recollection of this object that you think you are. Think as far back as you can go.

Visitor (after a minute or two) — The earliest recollection would perhaps be of being caressed and talked to by my mother.

Shri M. — You mean the tiny ~~and helpless~~ infant object. Would you say that the successful man of today is the same helpless infant, or is it someone else.

Visitor — It is undoubtedly the same.

Shri M. — Good. Now, if you think further back, would you agree that this infant which you can recollect is the same baby that was born to your mother — a helpless little object that ~~did not even~~ was too helpless even to realise when the body was

going through its natural physical functions, and cried when it was hungry?

Visitor: Yes ~~it~~ I was that baby.

Shri M: And before the baby acquired the body and was delivered, what were you?

Visitor: I don't understand.

Shri M.: You do understand. Think. What happened in your mother's womb? What was developing into a body with bone, marrow, muscle etc over a period of nine months? Was it not the male sperm germinating in the female womb? — and, in the process, going through innumerable hazards? Who guarded this speck of sperm during this period of hazards? Is it not this very speck of sperm that is now so proud of his achievements and success? And who asked for you? Your mother? — Your father? Did they particularly want you for a son? ~~Did what~~ Did you ~~do to~~ have anything to do with being born to these particular parents? Well?

Visitor: I am afraid I really haven't thought along these lines.

Shri M: Exactly. Do think along these lines. Then perhaps you will have an idea of your identity. Thereafter, consider if ~~[illegible]~~ ~~who [illegible] as it is who~~ anyone could possibly have any feeling of achievement and pride.

Visitor: I think I begin to understand what you are driving at.

Shri M.: If you go deeper into the matter, you will realise that the source of the body is itself the essence of food consumed by the parents, ~~and~~ that the ~~body~~ physical form is made of and fed by the five elements constituting food, & that the ~~physical~~ body of one creature ~~so~~ becomes the food for another creature.

~~Visitor~~ Visitor: But, surely, I, as such, must be something

other than this food body.

Shri M: Indeed you are. Find out what it is that gives sentience to a sentient being, that without which you would not know that you ~~exist~~ yourself exist, let alone the world outside. And finally, go deeper yet and see if this "BEINGNESS" itself is not time-bound.

Visitor: I shall certainly go into the various questions ~~and~~ you have raised although I must confess that I have never explored these areas before, and I feel almost giddy ~~with~~ in my ignorance. I hope I may come and see you again.

Shri M.: You will always be welcome.